the weekly
Standard

MAY 3, 2004

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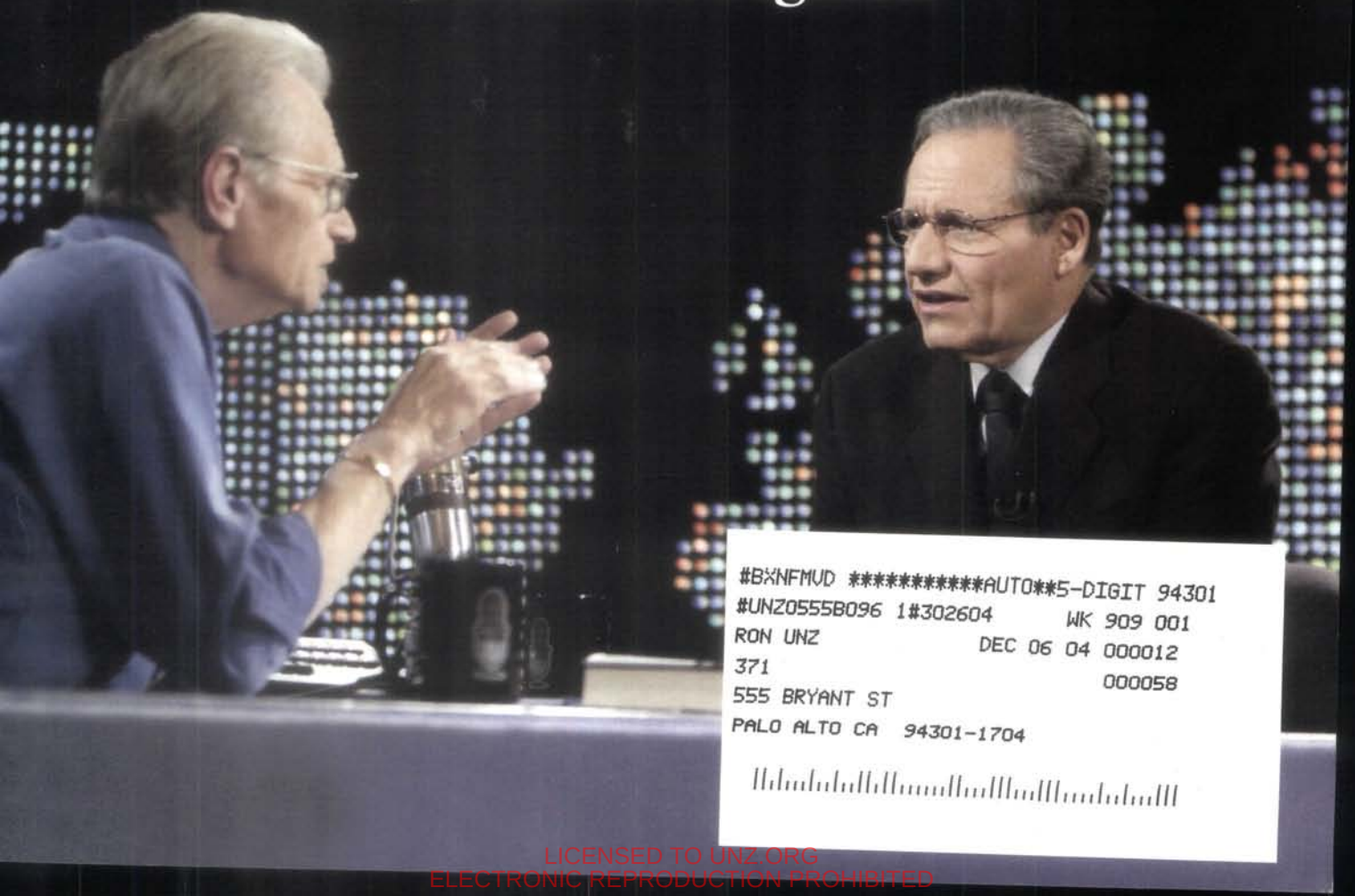
WHAT IS TO BE DONE IN IRAQ
REUEL MARC GERECHT

Bob Woodward's Washington

by Andrew Ferguson



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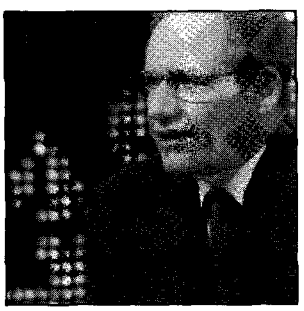

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the weekly Standard

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Eternal Verities

The *Los Angeles Times* reported last week that the **Federal Election Commission** has joined a ballooning, **multi-agency investigation** focusing on an August 2000 **Hollywood gala** that raised more than $1 million in Senate **campaign contributions** for then-first lady **Hillary Clinton.** Meanwhile, the **Justice Department** is continuing its **public corruption inquiry** into the activities of Chicago consultant David Rosen, who, as Mrs. Clinton's finance director, had a major role in organizing the Hollywood event, held on the eve of the **Democratic National Convention** and billed as a tribute to outgoing President **Bill Clinton**. The Justice Department is said to be concerned about possible **false statements** or other forms of **obstruction** by one or more witnesses. And a federal **grand jury** in Los Angeles is said to be examining evidence of related but much wider criminal wrongdoing by several people involved in the city's **Clinton-friendly celebrity circuit**.

One such person, fundraising impresario Aaron Tonken, has already **pleaded guilty** to **fraud** and has **cooperated** with federal investigators while awaiting **sentencing**. For instance: Tonken, whom Mrs. Clinton described as "my good friend" in a videotape broadcast at the August 2000 affair, is also a longtime friend of **Denise Rich**, and Tonken is reported to have talked to the FBI about President Clinton's **controversial last-minute pardon** of Rich's ex-husband, **billionaire fugitive Marc Rich**. For now, Tonken will say nothing about any of this publicly. But he may soon break his silence. At an April 15 creditors' session of his Chapter 7 personal bankruptcy proceeding, Tonken testified that he has secured a **book contract** to tell his tale. The book is scheduled for release in November by WND Books, in which the conservative Internet operation **WorldNetDaily** has an interest.

Which turns out to be only the tip of the **vast right-wing conspiracy** iceberg, here. Drug felon turned Internet entrepreneur turned Brazilian prison inmate turned cooperating witness Peter Paul, who is **awaiting trial** on his own federal fraud charges, has **sued the Clintons** in Los Angeles Superior Court for allegedly defrauding him in connection with the August 2000 gala. The event's upfront costs ran to nearly $2 million, it seems, the bulk of it coming from checks drawn against Wall Street margin accounts holding stock in Paul's company—which subsequently collapsed, triggering a **major SEC investigation**. Paul is being represented in his suit against the Clintons by **Larry Klayman** and **Judicial Watch**. The Clintons, in turn, are being represented by defense attorney **David Kendall**.

A third shady character, Paul's friend Stanley Myatt of Miami, gave several hundred thousand dollars for another fishy Aaron Tonken party starring Bill Clinton: "Family Celebration 2001," an ostensible charity benefit held at the **Beverly Wilshire Hotel** on April 1, 2001. Two months earlier, Myatt had been the intended target of a murder-for-hire plot foiled by the Palm Beach County sheriff's office. Myatt's would-be assassin: one James Pritchett, whose rap sheet includes a manslaughter conviction arising from a 1978 accident off the Florida Keys—in which the plane he was piloting nosedived straight into the ocean, killing his girlfriend, who'd apparently distracted him by performing an act of **oral sex**. Which just *had* to be a factor in a story like this, didn't it?

Oddly enough, *Newsweek*'s **Michael Isikoff** doesn't have anything to do with it at all, but we'll mention him anyhow, just for completeness' sake. ♦

Sen. Kerry's "Honest" Words

"Senator John Kerry on Sunday distanced himself from contentious statements he made three decades ago after returning from the Vietnam War, saying his long-ago use of the word 'atrocities' to describe his and others' actions was inappropriate and 'a little bit excessive.'"

That, anyway, is how Jodi Wilgoren's next-day *New York Times* story described Kerry's April 18 appearance on NBC's *Meet the Press*. THE SCRAPBOOK watched that show. Ms. Wilgoren must've been watching a different one.

The segment in question began with a little film-clip gem from the program's archives—a 1971 appearance by Kerry, then a leader of Vietnam Veterans Against the War. "There are all kinds of atrocities," this younger Kerry was shown earnestly insisting,

> and . . . I committed the same kind of atrocities as thousands of other soldiers . . . [including] free-fire zones . . . search-and-destroy missions [and] the burning of villages. . . . All of this is contrary to the Geneva Conventions, and all of this ordered as a matter of written, established policy by the government of the United States from the top down. And I believe that the men who designed . . . the free-fire zone, the men who ordered us, the men who signed off the air raid strike areas, I think these men, by the letter of the law, the same letter of the law that tried Lieutenant Calley, are war criminals.

When the clip was done, Russert turned to middle-aged John Kerry and said, simply, "You committed 'atrocities.'"

First Kerry tried a lame joke: "Where

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did all the dark hair go, Tim? That's a big question for me." Then Kerry did his distancing business: He'd "thought a lot" about the matter, "things we said," and he'd concluded that "atrocities" was "a bad word" to use, "inappropriate," one of those "mistakes" a man makes "in anger"—"honest" but "a little bit over the top." And then—the key word here being "honest"—Kerry *un-distanced* himself from all this over-the-toppery:

> And I think that there were breaches of the Geneva Conventions . . . and everybody knows that. I mean, books have chronicled that, so I'm not going to walk away from that. But I wish that I had found a way to say it in a less abrasive way.

Evidently curious about what might be a "less abrasive way" to call people "war criminals," Russert pointed out to Kerry that in 1971 he'd testified before Congress about American soldiers having "raped, cut off ears, cut off heads, taped wires from portable telephones to human genitals and on and on." Since "a lot of those stories have been discredited," Russert wondered—

But Kerry cut him off. "Actually, a lot of them have been documented," he claimed—though follow-up federal investigations determined that the so-called Winter Soldiers Hearings had been riddled with fabrications by "veterans" who'd never actually served in Vietnam. No matter, according to Kerry: "I'm proud that I stood up," and "I don't want anybody to think" otherwise, though he wishes he'd "phrased things more artfully at times."

Hmm. What's a more artful phrase for "cut off heads"? ♦

Speaking of Kerry and Vietnam

Last week the Kerry campaign posted on its website a trove of paper documenting the candidate's military career (*johnkerry.com/about/military_records.html*). THE SCRAPBOOK has pored through these files and found some minor amusements—like Kerry's handsome certificate from the Nuclear Weapons Training Center, Pacific, which features a nifty, pen-and-ink drawing of a giant mushroom cloud as its logo. Oh, yeah: THE SCRAPBOOK has also found evidence possibly relevant to a judgment about the quality of John Kerry's brain.

Kerry's transcript from Officer Candidate School, for example, recounts that he finished 80th in a class of 563, with numerical grades equivalent to low Bs in "Tactical" and "Technological" and middle Bs in "Organizational" and "Military Aptitude"—for an overall "final average" in the low-to-middle B range.

Then, on Kerry's Training School "Officer's Qualification Record," there's what is, for THE SCRAPBOOK at least, a tantalizing mystery. The document is blurry and largely blank. But it does contain one discernible bit of data: results from Kerry's "Officer Qualification Test." Those results read like this: Under "Form," it says "7." Under "Raw Score" it says "58." And under "Stand. Score" it says "50."

Readers able to clarify what any of this means—and whether, *please, please, please*, the numbers might represent some kind of IQ algorithm—are strongly urged to let us know at *scrapbook@weeklystandard.com*. ♦

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Casual

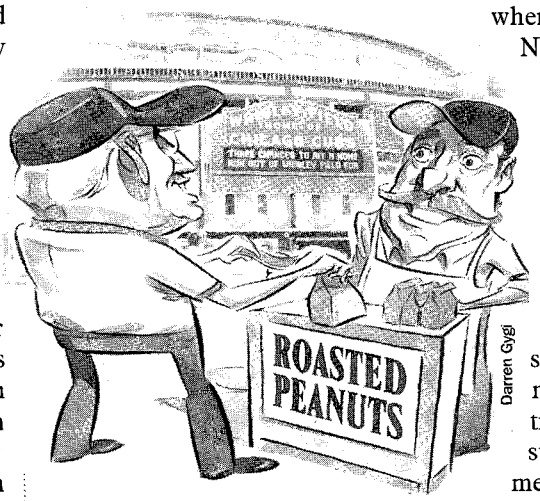
Take Me Out to the Ballgame

My Cubs tickets have arrived. Seven sets of two tickets each. And what seats: eight rows off the field, on the first-base side, right at the visiting team's on-deck circle. I buy them from a friend who has held Cubs season tickets through three marriages. He could get more for my seats by selling them to an agent, but he generously sells them to me. He told me that he was reserving a seat to one of last year's Cubs World Series games for me. But, as every baseball fan knows, for the Cubs it didn't happen.

It's supposed to happen this year, though one would have to be Dr. Pangloss's even dreamier brother not to have the most strenuous doubts. Most Cubs fans, if they are anything like me, are working out scenarios of disaster for the team this year: Two pitchers from the starting rotation go down with shoulder and elbow problems in August; a $10-million-dollar-a-year outfielder loses his concentration afield because he is contemplating a same-sex marriage; the team's manager is accused of having al Qaeda connections. Many are the roads to failure, of which the Cubs have traveled most, few those to success, of which the Cubs have found none.

I don't have the Cubs sickness at the fatal or even chronic stage. I'm pleased when the team wins, slightly down when they lose, but thoughts of suicide do not play in my head. The larger fact is that I enjoy baseball, and seem to enjoy it even more as I grow older. I continue to discover details of deeper intricacy about this ostensibly simple game: such as the complaint that the great catcher Ivan Rodriguez, to protect his percentage of throwing out base runners, calls for too many fastballs with men on base. But I find no subtle metaphors in the game, seek no secret geometries as I gaze out at the diamond. I merely enjoy watching the players do the remarkable but insignificant things they do for the astonishing sums they are paid to do them.

As with all baseball fans, I have also had to apply at a high power what, in a very different context, Coleridge called "a willing suspension of disbelief." I have to put out of my mind that these players feel less loyalty to the teams for which they play than does the normal fan. Let their agents arrange another million dollars or so for them and—later, alligator—they are gone. Ballplayers on steroids is another matter that must be put out of mind, as home runs go crashing out of parks and asterisks are one day likely to come flying back, noting that certain records were established with chemical support. About player salaries, best not to speak.



Darren Gygi

The greater part of the attraction to the Cubs for me is what old-timers call the ballyard, the team's splendid old stadium, Wrigley Field. Anyone who has been there knows the charm of the place. Wrigley Field has serious advantages over more modern baseball parks. Fans are closer to the playing field than in most other parks; no signs advertising products are allowed to deface the field, though I did note last year that the Cubs ownership, the Chicago Tribune Company, permitted Sears to attach its name, in fairly subdued yellow neon, to a sign that registers the speed of pitches. The team still plays the preponderant number of its games during the day; this, too, is slowly changing, and the number of night games—which was originally supposed to be no more than 18—is scheduled to increase in coming years.

But the greatest advantage of all in Wrigley Field is that it does not have a scoreboard on which televised images are shown. This means that one doesn't have to endure the sound of trumpets drawing one's attention to an immense television screen where a race of M&Ms is underway.

Nor is any but organ music played at Wrigley Field, and this, happily, only intermittently, which gives one a chance to talk to friends between innings. Unlike NBA games, where no time without entertainment is allowed—bring on the dancing girls, clowns, small blimps—at Wrigley Field one feels the sweet slow leisure of a summer afternoon, given over to the fine but trivial pursuit of watching men do superbly what as a boy one did merely enthusiastically.

My Cubs tickets are always for midweek day games. Going to a baseball game during the day in the middle of the week, when everyone else is working, lends the outing the small but genuine piquancy of vice. I usually leave home a full hour before the game so that I can find a free parking space and thus save the $20 fee. (This, along with being one of those selective cheapnesses that I believe we all have, gives me a precise valuation of my hourly worth: twenty bucks.) I buy my peanuts and a hot dog outside before going into the park. Eight rows off the field, I sit in the sun, watch the game, and, my mind floating pleasantly, wonder why it was that I ever thought life was complicated.

Joseph Epstein

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Justice League

Michael Chertoff's excellent article on the International Criminal Court (ICC) may have left readers with a misunderstanding of the Bush administration's efforts to protect Americans against the ICC ("Justice Denied," April 12/April 19). We have now signed bilateral agreements with 85 countries to protect all American citizens from being surrendered to the ICC by these countries. Chertoff's reference to "U.S. personnel" may appear to refer only to U.S. military and civilian government employees, but, in fact, we aim to protect all American citizens, and we will not compromise on that point.

John R. Bolton
Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security
U.S. Department of State
Washington, DC

Thrilla in Manila

In "Manila Folder" (April 12/April 19), P.J. O'Rourke refers to the events surrounding the defection of 30 young Filipinos who were working for COMELEC, the Philippine government's Commission on Elections appointed by Ferdinand Marcos. Charged with compiling the final vote tally, they walked off the job and retreated to the local church protesting that the vote figures were being juggled in various ways.

I was one of the members of the American delegation that NAMFREL—the National Movement for Free Elections—brought to the church to meet with 30 protesters. I met with them, along with another member of our delegation, and also talked and met with a number of people who had gathered until early in the morning at the church.

We reported back on this event to the overall delegation, which in turn reported back to the Reagan administration in very clear terms our conclusion that the invisible parts of the election which our delegation could not witness had corrupted the electoral process and that the result posted by the Marcos administration was fraudulent.

This position was adopted by the Reagan administration and was confirmed by separate intelligence gathered through other means, including technical means.

Mortimer B. Zuckerman
U.S. News & World Report
New York, NY

Subsidy Stop

Cynthia Grenier, in her review of *Americans in Paris: A Literary Anthology* (The Standard Reader, April 12/April 19), makes a factual error when she refers to the Library of America as "deeply subsidized."

The Library of America was begun in 1979 with onetime seed funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Ford Foundation. There is no ongoing subvention, and we are 92 percent self-supporting through sales of books, the remainder of our budget made up primarily by contributions from individuals who support our nonprofit mission.

Max Rudin
Publisher, the Library of America
New York, NY

A Pox on Both Houses

Americans need the press to cut through the partisan hype surrounding the 9/11 Commission and keep public debate focused on improving our response to the terrorist threat. Daniel C. Twining's "Who Lost Osama?" (April 12/April 19) does exactly this by dissecting Richard Clarke's arguments in his book, *Against All Enemies*, and demonstrating that the Clinton administration did not do enough to thwart al Qaeda during the 1990s.

But Twining slides off course when he compares President Clinton's efforts with President Bush's actions *after* 9/11. It is becoming increasingly clear, after all, that stopping al Qaeda was no more of a priority for the pre-9/11 Bush administration than it was for the Clinton administration.

We need to state unequivocally that neither administration did enough to stop terrorism, and then get on with the harder task of restructuring our government so that it responds more effectively to potential threats.

Jim Dawson
New York, NY

Backdraft

Speaking as a firefighter, I can say that, contrary to Eli Lehrer's "Do We Need More Firefighters?" (April 12/April 19), John Kerry does *not* "light my fire." If Harold Schaitberger, the president of the International Association of Firefighters, likes Kerry, that is his problem, not mine. I don't vote the way the union tells me to vote. Historically, most unions, not just the IAFF, have supported liberal candidates.

Furthermore, Lehrer's argument that we actually need fewer firefighters is specious at best. True, the number of structure fires is down, due mainly to successful fire-prevention activities. But do we need fewer dentists because of better cavity prevention?

It's best to think of fire departments as one would a specialized tool. You might not need to use it every day. But when you need it, it sure is handy.

Eric Olson
Soulsbyville, CA

Iraq Star

Having just spent time as the house guest of an Iraqi business-

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man in Baghdad, I found Fred Barnes's observations in "The Bumpy Road to Democracy in Iraq" to be right on target (April 5). Two points made to me by my host in the form of constructive criticism, however, are relevant to the situation in Iraq. First, my host believes that the United States made a serious mistake by disbanding the Iraqi army. The rank and file of the army were unwilling to fight for Saddam, as was indicated when regular units dissolved at the approach of American forces. The soldiers put down their weapons and went home. These men were—and are—trained soldiers who need work and would be a valuable asset in providing security.

Second, he warned me that the United States seriously underestimates the determination of various governments in the Middle East (like Syria, Iran, and Saudi Arabia) to see that the American effort in Iraq fails.

These governments do not want a free and prosperous state on their borders and are covertly trying to obstruct American and Iraqi efforts to build such a state.

VICTOR CANNON
Houston, TX

GOING SOUTH?

FEW WOULD DISPUTE that South Africa is the strongest democratic state on the African continent. However, Max Boot's assertion in the March 22, 2004, issue of THE WEEKLY STANDARD that South Africa is a "flourishing democracy" is overstated ("Against All Odds").

There are many proscriptive laws on the statute book or in the legislative pipeline—particularly with regard to labor, race, health, and economic matters—that, if passed, could drive South Africa backward in its democratic development.

Boot asserts that, at least in the near future, South Africa "seems destined for one-party democracy." However, Secretary of State Colin Powell made an important distinction in South Africa in May 2001 when he said, "The truest test of democracy is not the first election or the second or the third; democracy takes root when leaders step down peacefully, when they are voted out of office or when their terms expire."

South Africa's young democracy has yet to see a party leave the executive office. The ANC's backing for Robert Mugabe—who has ruled Zimbabwe for almost 25 years—raises the question of whether it might behave similarly to Mugabe's ZANU-PF party if faced with a possible electoral defeat sometime in the future.

South Africa's attitude toward Mugabe sends a disturbing signal as to the development of its own democracy. The atrocities of Mugabe's government are no secret, and Mbeki has yet to apply any of South Africa's considerable leverage on its neighbor to step down from office or even provide a token of political transparency in the country.

Boot rightly highlights some of South Africa's key successes, such as bringing down inflation and the budget deficit. But a big part of a healthy democracy is the inclination of a government to respond to the needs of its people. Nowhere is South Africa more lacking than in its response to the AIDS pandemic.

In fact, Thabo Mbeki has been more of an obstacle than a leader in the campaign against the virus. Until recently he made the outlandish claim that HIV does not cause AIDS. Because of his views Mbeki has been reluctant to provide access to antiretroviral treatment, and his general silence about AIDS has put South Africa at the back of the pack of African countries that are working to stem the spread of the virus.

Given its relative economic size in sub-Saharan Africa, South Africa has the weight to make a powerful impact for good or ill on the whole subcontinent. And I agree with Boot that it is in the strategic interest of the United States to encourage regional powers—especially South Africa—to spread liberal values.

South Africa should, indeed, be commended for the great strides it has made in these last 10 years since the fall of its apartheid government.

But the nation still has obstacles to overcome, both inherited and self-inflicted, before it can realize its true potential as the democratic standard-bearer for its region and its continent.

JEFF KRILLA
Washington, DC

TWISTED SISTERS

IN "LEFTOVER GLAMOUR" (April 5), Noemie Emery figures out what I could have told her anyway: These days no one buys women's magazines for their inane articles. In fact, the liberal bias in such articles may compromise the magazines' effectiveness in their core function, which is promoting an unrealistic ideal of fashion and beauty to American women. What's more, for over a decade the *haute couture* of women's magazines has been about as exciting as watching paint dry. I now buy such magazines only once a year. And I suspect there are many women like me.

JENNIFER DYER
Hemet, CA

AFTER FALLUJA

WILLIAM KRISTOL'S "After Falluja" (April 12/April 19) outlines several parallels between the murder and mutilation of four American civilian contractors in Falluja and the Black Hawk Down incident in Somalia in 1993. The difference between the two incidents, however, is American resolve. Today we have a strong, moral president, a superb military, and a just cause.

BILL STRONG
Elk Grove, CA

• • •

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We Agree.

President Bush has announced a bold policy on broadband, calling for investment in infrastructure, creation of jobs and new choices for consumers.

How will we achieve the president's goal?

One approach is central state planning where the government manages competition, sets prices and picks winners and losers.

The other is the American Way: unleash the free market.

Companies in the cable, wireless, satellite, wireline and powerline industries are eager to compete by letting the free-market — not the government — pick winners and losers.

The *Wall Street Journal* frames the choice as between, "...a short-term political calculation" or "...a free-market approach that would better serve the specific industry and the economy as a whole."

Or as President Bush himself put it last week on the role of the federal government versus the marketplace, "...I tend to side with those who believe market forces are the best way to allocate resources..."

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the weekly Standard

A Hard Country to Defend

Twice in recent days, President Bush has described America as "a hard country to defend." In part, he is prudently lowering expectations that our success in stopping all attacks on American soil after 9/11 will continue indefinitely. At a gathering of newspaper editors on April 21, the president was asked about a poll showing two-thirds of Americans believe we will suffer another attack before Election Day. He gave a reasonable answer that suggested he shared the bleak, majority view: "I can understand why they think we're going to get hit again. They saw what happened in Madrid. This is a hard country to defend."

In part, too, the president is pointing out the obvious. A country as large and open and free as the United States is a target-rich environment for terrorists, especially suicidal ones. It doesn't take an active imagination to conjure in one's mind any number of frightful vulnerabilities that could be exploited by our enemies even now, when memories of 9/11 are fresh and we are vigilant. This of course is why George W. Bush decided two and a half years ago that we had no better choice than to fight the war on terror militarily, killing as many al Qaeda leaders, footsoldiers, financiers, functionaries, enablers, and allies as we can, wherever they are in the world. And it's why Congress passed the Patriot Act to beef up our surveillance and interdiction capabilities.

But there is another way still in which this is a hard country to defend. As the 9/11 Committee hearings have made abundantly clear, when FBI agents hot on the trail of al Qaeda hijackers in the summer of 2001 were unable to connect the dots, that's because the system *worked* as it was designed to. We had institutionalized safeguards against what in retrospect looks like a scandalously exaggerated suspicion of federal police powers.

Stewart Baker, general counsel of the National Security Agency from 1992 to 1994, gave eloquent testimony to the commission on this subject last year, some of which was later published in *Slate*:

> That "wall"—between intelligence and law enforcement—was put in place to protect against a hypothetical risk to civil liberties that might arise if domestic law enforcement and foreign intelligence missions were allowed to mix. It was a post-Watergate fix meant to protect Americans, not kill them. In fact, in 1994, after I left my job as general counsel to the National Security Agency, I argued that the wall should be left in place because I accepted the broad assumption that foreign intelligence-gathering tolerates a degree of intrusiveness, harshness, and deceit that Americans do not want applied against themselves. I recognized at the time that these privacy risks were just abstract worries, but I accepted the conventional wisdom: "However theoretical the risks to civil liberties may be, they cannot be ignored." . . . I was wrong, but not alone, in assigning a high importance to theoretical privacy risks. In hindsight, that choice seems little short of feckless.

Unfortunately, the culture of suspicion that raised the wall in the first place survived the 9/11 attacks and is still alive, if not exactly well. Congress made many of the key Patriot Act provisions temporary, in a bow to that culture, and they will expire next year. That's why President Bush last week called on Congress to "renew the Patriot Act and to make all of its provisions permanent." He surely knows this will start a fight, but it's a necessary debate, and one voters deserve to hear before voting this fall.

John Kerry, for instance, though he voted for the Patriot Act in 2001, happily panders to the paranoiacs of his party, praising the "sunset clause" that takes effect next year and saying he will "change the Patriot Act" because it's problematic when you have an attorney general like John Ashcroft who doesn't "respect" the Constitution. We've heard right-wing libertarians make exactly the same argument in reverse: The Patriot Act is fine with Bush in charge, but God help us if Hillary Clinton becomes president in 2008.

We think both arguments are nonsense: Americans will be safer, their liberties more secure, if attorney generals of both parties have at their disposal the surveillance tools made available by the Patriot Act. More than that, though, we think the issue is too important to put off till next year, as some powerful congressional Republicans are reported to favor doing. It may be a hard country to defend, but there's no time like the present to debate how best to do it.

—Richard Starr, for the Editors

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To Know Him Is Not to Love Him

America doesn't warm up to John Kerry.

BY FRED BARNES

PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNS have windows. These are periods of a few days, sometimes several weeks, in which the interest of voters is piqued and they take a serious look at the candidates. The first window of the Bush-Kerry race came after John Kerry locked up the Democratic nomination on Super Tuesday, March 2. There will be more windows: during and after the party conventions, around the presidential debates, and at other times when events intervene. Kerry will need these windows. The first window was a downer for him. My explanation: Bush's negative ads stung, but Kerry's biggest problem was that swing voters found him stiff and unlikable.

Start with the polls. A Gallup/*USA Today*/CNN poll had Kerry leading 52 to 44 percent among likely voters just after Super Tuesday. Six weeks later, Bush had jumped ahead 51 to 46 percent. The Gallup numbers are virtually the same with or without Ralph Nader in the race. The ABC News-*Washington Post* poll showed a similar reversal, from a Kerry lead of 48 to 44 percent to a Bush advantage of 48 to 43 percent.

The head-to-head results weren't the worst of it for Kerry. "In early March, riding high off his primary victories, Kerry led in public trust to handle eight issues out of eleven," said ABC polling analyst Gary Langer. Kerry led (outside the margin of error) on the economy, health insurance, education, Social Security, deficit, taxes, jobs, and prescription drugs. "Today Kerry leads only in trust to handle health care, and by just 6 points, compared with a 20-point advantage last month." In other words, Kerry collapsed across the board. This means, to me anyway, that it's not an issue or two that's hurting Kerry. It's something more fundamental, like the man himself, his style, his manner of speaking, his public presence.

Bush on the campaign trail

Reuters / Landov / Larry Downing

A number of Republicans and a few Democrats I'm not at liberty to name have jumped to the same conclusion. A senior Republican familiar with focus groups that looked at clips of Kerry said these descriptions came up: cold fish, aloof, condescending, liberal, boring, panderer, willing to say anything. Of course those weren't the only descriptions. Some were favorable: served his country, attractive, tall. Women, more than men, saw favorable traits in Kerry. Republican national chairman Ed Gillespie says this of Kerry's decline: "He doesn't wear well. The more John Kerry is out there, the better we are."

Gillespie's assessment can be discounted. Given his position, what else would he say? But a Washington financial consultant with ties to both Democrats and Republicans told his clients that private state polls show voters aren't warming up to Kerry. The more exposure Kerry has on the retail level, the more his poll numbers swing negative, the consultant said. He said Kerry's problem may not be fatal if he adjusts his campaign style.

The Bush campaign's TV ads criticizing Kerry have also played a role in his tumble. Democratic pollster Stan Greenberg found in focus groups that "negative perceptions driven by the media dominate the positive ones." Greenberg's group, Democracy Corps, conducted focus groups in the suburbs of Orlando, Florida, Columbus, Ohio, Portland, Oregon, and Washington, D.C. "The messages in Bush's negative ads against Kerry had penetrated voters' thinking," Greenberg said. "A dominant attitude was that Kerry changes his position on issues and tells people what they want to hear [and] he will also raise their taxes."

Susan Page of *USA Today* discovered in two focus groups in Missouri that with the ads the Bush campaign was "achieving its early goal" of defining Kerry negatively. "Voters who know little else about the Massachusetts senator are echoing Bush's ads," Page wrote. The Bush campaign has spent more than $40 million on ads in

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the 18 states that figure to be the most closely contested. Bush aides argue that Democrats have been attacking Bush just as much, when the cost of TV spots run by independent groups is added to what the Kerry campaign and Democratic National Committee have spent.

What has puzzled the political community about Kerry's dip is that it's come during a period of bad news for *Bush*. Violence and American casualties in Iraq have grown in recent weeks, and members of the 9/11 Commission have suggested the Bush administration could have prevented the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. Meanwhile, media accounts of the new book by Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, have stressed parts unfavorable to the president. On balance, however, the book portrays Bush as an effective wartime leader.

The conventional interpretation is that somehow, through a mysterious alchemy of the public's manner of reaching opinions, Bush was aided by the subject matter under discussion. When the focus is on Iraq or terrorism, Bush is said to gain because he's seen as having credibility on those issues. You know, he's tough and strong and relentless. I don't buy this. The notion that Bush gains from being pilloried on the right topics doesn't pass the common sense test.

The truth is Bush is more likable than Kerry. And his ads have been soft-hitting but clever and pointed—not heavy-handed as some Bush allies feared they would be. All this doesn't add up to an assured Bush victory on November 2, however, far from it. The much-touted wrong track number, 57 percent, indicates reelection trouble for Bush. Bush remains highly vulnerable, though not as vulnerable as his father was in 1992 or Jimmy Carter was in 1980. But in those elections, the challengers, Bill Clinton and Ronald Reagan, were political powerhouses who had the added benefit of enormous charm and likability. This is a benefit Kerry will have to get along without, or at least wait for the next window. ♦

Sugar Mommy

Why won't Teresa Heinz Kerry release her tax returns? BY MATTHEW CONTINETTI

THE DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE'S spouse refuses to disclose tax returns. Republicans seize the issue, asking what the spouse is hiding. The *New York Times* calls for full disclosure. Distracted by the controversy, the candidate is on the defensive. The spouse eventually relents and agrees to release five years' worth of tax returns, but only after the candidate's campaign has been damaged.

Sound familiar? Yes, John Kerry's wife, Teresa Heinz Kerry, has refused to make her tax returns public, and her decision has caused some controversy. But she's not the spouse in the example above. That would be John A. Zaccaro, husband of then-New York congresswoman Geraldine Ferraro, the Democratic vice presidential nominee in 1984. And if the Kerry campaign doesn't learn from the historical record, it risks its own John Zaccaro problem.

Twenty years ago Ferraro was bedeviled by her inconsistency. In July '84, she said she would release both her and her husband's tax returns. Yet a month later she backtracked and said she would release only her returns. Then she backtracked again, saying her husband would release "a financial—a tax statement" on August 20. But she must not have consulted her husband, because Zaccaro initially refused. Finally he agreed to make public his tax returns from 1979 to 1984, after Republican attacks detracted from his wife's campaign.

When John Kerry talks about his wife's returns, he isn't inconsistent. He's inaccurate. He said on *Meet the Press* last week that presidential candidates are required by law to release their income tax returns. In fact, no such law exists. Releasing tax information has been customary since 1976. Also on *Meet the Press*, after host Tim Russert mentioned the Ferraro example, Kerry suggested his wife's decision not to release her returns wasn't a problem, because American politicians "have far more intrusive ethics forms today" than in 1984. "If you want to see what my wife's holdings are," Kerry said, "you can go to our Senate ethics forms. It shows you exactly what we have. It's very, very, very intrusive."

Kerry is dead wrong, for a couple of reasons. First, House and Senate members have been filling out financial disclosure forms for their respective ethics committees since 1978. In fact, Geraldine Ferraro had trouble with these forms, too. As a congresswoman, she regularly claimed to be exempt from disclosing her husband's finances, which would have been legal, provided she had no knowledge of her spouse's financial activities and had not profited from them. The problem was that Ferraro claimed the exemption even though she was an *officer* of her husband's real estate firm, P. Zaccaro & Company.

And congressional disclosure forms aren't as intrusive as Kerry says. It's true the forms contain a detailed list of a congressional couple's financial assets. But there's little specificity when it comes to the *value* of those assets. For example, poring through Kerry's most recent Senate disclosure form, which covers the 2002 calendar year, one finds that the senator and his

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wife have a stake in the Flying Squirrel charter airplane company in Delaware. But the form tells you only that the stake is "over $1,000,000," and that the investment provided somewhere between $50,001 and $100,000 in income in 2002.

What the congressional disclosure forms omit is also important. A tax return reveals someone's charitable contributions, for example, as well as an individual's mortgage deductions. Also, a tax return includes contributions to nonprofit organizations, including political ones. No such information is contained in the forms legislators submit to the House and Senate ethics committees.

Yet Heinz is adamant. She won't disclose her tax returns, she said through a spokesman, because she isn't a candidate for office. Why should she be subjected to the same scrutiny as her husband? Heinz has a point. She isn't breaking any law. She enjoys the same privacy rights as others. But she's now the first wife of a presidential candidate to refuse disclosure since the practice became customary. What would be in her tax returns that's worth keeping secret?

A lot, actually. One Republican lawyer says Heinz's returns would be a "treasure trove of opposition research." One thing the returns would show, this lawyer says, is the extent to which Kerry is a "kept man." According to his tax return, Kerry's income in 2003 was $395,338—over half of which came from the sale of his quarter interest in a 17th-century Dutch painting co-owned by Teresa and the art dealer Peter Tillou. (The 4' x 8' painting, incidentally, is "The Arrival of Frederick and Elizabeth, Prince and Princess of the Palatinate, at Flushing, April 29, 1613" by Adam Willaerts.) Sure, it was a high-income year for the senator. But in 2003, Kerry also took out a $6.4 million mortgage on his share of the couple's Beacon Hill townhouse in Boston to fund his strapped presidential campaign.

The Beacon Hill townhouse has come in handy before. Heinz bought it in 1995, the year she and Kerry married, for $1.7 million. An extensive renovation upped the market value to about $3 million. Then Heinz gave her husband ownership of half the house. A year later, in 1996, he mortgaged his share of the house in order to lend his Senate reelection campaign $900,000. It took the senator three years to pay off the loan. Boston journalists have long wondered how Kerry was able to get such plum mortgages on his Senate income. The answer is simple. His wife is worth nearly $550 million.

Zuma Press / Dan Herrick-KPA

John and Teresa Heinz Kerry

Making Heinz's tax returns public would confirm that she's Kerry's sugar daddy (sugar mommy?). It would also strike a blow against Kerry's populist rhetoric by detailing the lavish lifestyle he and his wife enjoy: the vacation home in Nantucket, the ski chalet in Ketchum, Idaho, the estate outside Pittsburgh, the Georgetown manse. Not to mention the red-and-white Gulfstream jet. And the tax returns could embarrass the Kerry campaign further if it's revealed that Heinz has contributed to independent organizations working to unseat President Bush.

A Bush campaign official says there are no plans to make an issue out of Heinz's tax returns. That's a big difference from 1984, when Republican surrogates took to the airwaves denouncing John Zaccaro. (Vice President George H.W. Bush's spokesman called Zaccaro "a very selfish man.") But the political press has started to question Heinz. Robert Novak devoted a column to the subject last week, for example. And the *New York Times* editorial page weighed in as well. "We urge that the candidate's wife, Teresa Heinz Kerry, release her tax returns," the editors wrote. The *Times* is being consistent. In 1984, during the Zaccaro controversy, an editorial in its pages said: "Mrs. Ferraro's husband, like Caesar's wife, must be above suspicion." Is Teresa Heinz? ♦

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The Foreseeable Past

The 9/11 hijackings didn't come out of the blue.

BY JONATHAN V. LAST

MOST OF THE Monday-morning quarterbacking done in the wake of the 9/11 Commission has been unfair. One federal agency, however, really could have taken steps to stymie the attacks—the FAA. By simply changing its guidelines on how to handle hijackings, the Federal Aviation Administration could conceivably have prevented September 11.

Known as the Common Strategy, the FAA's hijacking protocol instructed pilots and crews never to resist, confront, or negotiate with hijackers. Instead, they were to peacefully accede to a hijacker's demands, even if this meant turning over control of the aircraft.

This policy was developed starting in the 1960s in response to a rash of air piracy, and at the time it made sense. Through the early 1970s, most domestic hijackings were carried out by fugitives and criminals seeking to flee America. The destination was often Cuba (which had no extradition for hijackers until 1973), and the FAA's primary concern was loss of life on the aircraft. Not unreasonably, the agency, essentially, advised: Everyone sit still and enjoy the ride. The Common Strategy remained in place, largely unaltered, until September 11.

In the aftermath of 9/11, various U.S. officials have insisted they had no way of foreseeing the use of a hijacked airplane as a weapon. Former FBI director Louis Freeh told the 9/11 Commission he "never was aware of a plan that contemplated commercial airliners being used as weapons after a hijacking. I don't think that was integrated into any plan." President Bush said much the same during his April 13 press conference: "Nobody in our government at least—and I don't think in the prior government—could envision flying airplanes into buildings, on such a massive scale."

Besides which, as one FAA official who left the agency shortly before 9/11 told me, "Up to 9/11 the Common Strategy was borne out by 40-some years of history. . . . The accepted theory was: Agree to almost anything and just get the airplane down on the ground. Once the airplane is on the ground, then we have a lot of other resources to put on it."

Not everyone sees it that way. Former FAA security chief Billy Vincent says, "The argument that we had no idea that the hijackers could use the airplanes as bombs is pure bull—." Vincent Cannistraro, a former head of the CIA's counterterrorism operations, says that by the mid-1990s, there was sufficient evidence of terrorists "thinking of flying planes into buildings" that the Common Strategy clearly needed revision. Even before that, there had been cases of people planning to use commercial aircraft as weapons. *Troubled Passage*, the fifth volume of the FAA's self-published history, describes two such hijackings. In November 1972, three fugitives hijacked a Southern Airlines DC-9 and threatened to crash it into a nuclear facility. The authorities became so concerned that they shot out the plane's tires during a refueling stop.

Then in February 1974, one Samuel J. Byck stormed a Baltimore airport, killed a security guard, and boarded a plane sitting at the gate. He ordered the plane to take off, and when there was a slight delay, Byck shot the pilot and copilot. Wounded by the police, he committed suicide before the plane got off the ground. Afterwards, it was discovered that Byck had left behind a tape detailing "Operation Pandora's Box," his plan to crash the plane into the White House.

Fast forward to convicted terrorist Ramzi Yousef. The *New York Times* reports that "in interviews with FBI agents in the mid-'90s [Yousef] seemed obsessed with the notion of hijacking airliners and attacking vulnerable targets." When Yousef's terror cell in the Philippines was broken up in 1995, one of his followers, Abdul Hakim Murad, told Philippine police that he and Yousef had discussed hijacking a commercial jet and flying it into CIA headquarters at Langley. The report, which was passed on to U.S. authorities, sketched the idea this way: "He will board any American commercial aircraft pretending to be an ordinary passenger. Then he will hijack said aircraft, control its cockpit, and dive it at the CIA headquarters. There will be no bomb or any explosive that he will use in its execution. It is simply a suicidal mission that he is very much willing to execute."

Even aside from these events, members of the intelligence community had considered the scenario. Last week, NORAD revealed that it ran a simulation between 1991 and 2001 in which the central concern was a hijacked airliner being crashed into a high-profile building in the United States.

What's more, officials at the World Trade Center and Pentagon were themselves concerned about a September 11-style attack, according to Jeff Beatty, a former FBI, CIA, and Delta Force operative who runs Total Security, a consulting firm. Beatty had worked with security personnel at both sites. His brief threat-matrix analysis had concluded that both were vulnerable to jumbo-jet suicide

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attacks. "In both cases, to their credit, we weren't the first ones telling them that," Beatty says. "They had come to that on their own. I guess that kind of begs the question: If the World Trade Center and the Pentagon could conceive of this attack against them, why couldn't the airlines?"

When asked, the FAA declines to comment. The official who left the agency before 9/11 blames a failure of intelligence: "The FAA was a regulatory security agency. It did not have access to first-line intelligence data. It had what the other agencies gave it." He explains that in order to revise the Common Strategy, "the FAA would have had to show that there was an immediate threat—which they couldn't."

As far as access to intelligence goes, Cannistraro says the FAA, as part of the counterterrorism center at CIA, "was familiar with all of the latest intelligence threats against aircraft." And Vincent, who left the FAA in 1986 and is now president of Aerospace Services International, says the agency turned its eye from this evidence. "If you don't want to do anything, you can find any number of excuses for not doing it," he says.

Consider the hijacking of Air France flight 8969 out of Algiers in 1994. After Islamic militants took over, they landed for refueling in Marseilles, and commandos stormed the plane. Recounting the incident, the former FAA official says, "There were reports that the hijackers really wanted to fly the plane into the Eiffel Tower, but all the hijackers got killed . . . and nothing was ever verified."

The FAA must have a mighty high standard for verification. The Air France hijackers claimed they wanted to fly to Paris and hold a press conference. When negotiators in Marseilles offered to make media outlets available to them, the hijackers refused, demanding 27 tons of fuel, though 10 tons was sufficient to reach Paris. The French embassy in Algiers, meanwhile, received a phone tip claiming that the hijackers' real goal was to detonate the plane over Paris (20 sticks of dynamite were later found onboard).

Agence France Presse / George Gobet

Passengers leave Air France flight 8969 via emergency slide.

The tip triggered the decision to launch the commando raid in which the terrorists were killed. Afterwards, freed hostages told authorities they'd overheard the hijackers whispering about crashing the jet into the Eiffel Tower.

Circumstantial though it is, all this evidence might have persuaded many people outside the FAA that terrorists were actively interested in using airliners as weapons. But, notes Vincent, "Actionable intelligence is in the eye of the beholder."

Indeed, the 9/11 Commission staff report itself concedes that "the potential for terrorist suicide hijacking in the United States was officially considered by the FAA's Office of Civil Aviation Security dating back to at least March 1998. However, in a presentation the agency made to air carriers and airports in 2000 and early 2001 the FAA discounted the threat because, 'fortunately, we have no indication that any group is currently thinking in that direction.'"

The threat, of course, was real. Had the FAA appreciated it, the agency could have rewritten the Common Strategy at any time, according to Vincent. While the normal rule-making process is prolonged, the FAA could have adopted an Emergency Amendment "in about an hour or so." Crews could have been instructed to land a hijacked plane as soon as possible, for example, and to keep cockpit doors locked at all costs. Says Vincent, "You would do everything in the world to keep that airplane from being commandeered by the adversary. Including unusual maneuvers. You wanted to get that airplane on the ground immediately. . . . It's a philosophy change."

The 9/11 Commission was hard on the FAA, but civilian security experts are harder. "I think there was enough information out there that if I had been in the airline business, I would have changed my Common Strategy prior to 9/11," says Jeff Beatty.

The former FAA official disagrees. "How are you going to tell an airline, 'Well, we think it's kind of a good idea but we don't have any real information and we don't have any threat and we haven't had a hijacking in over 10 years, but we think you ought to do this'? No, it ain't going to fly. It's typical Tom Clancy, and of course the industry fights Tom Clancy all the time."

In Clancy's 1994 bestseller *Debt of Honor*, a Japanese terrorist flies a commercial jumbo jet into the Capitol. The FAA must have discounted that one, too. ♦

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Cuba's 5-Fingered Diplomacy

Assault and battery in Geneva.

BY KATHERINE MANGU-WARD

"I DIDN'T GO to the U.N. to get into a fist fight," said Frank Calzon, executive director of the Center for a Free Cuba—or, as he is known in Havana, "lackey to the United States, traitor to the motherland, capitalist pig, terrorist, and CIA agent." Calzon went to Geneva to deliver two three-minute speeches on Cuba's human rights record to the 60th annual meeting of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights last week. He wound up unconscious on the floor.

On the day the resolution condemning Cuba passed by a single vote, Calzon was standing outside the chamber where the commission meets. "It's like in the lobby of a theater. There are 60 or 80 people, lots of people," he said. A young man ran down an escalator and approached Calzon from behind, clasped his hands, and struck Calzon on the back of the head. Calzon fell, unconscious. American ambassador Kevin Moley witnessed the incident and ran after the assailant. Two Swiss guards got to the man first, however, and tackled him.

Cuban ambassador Jorge Mora Godoy arrived on the scene and demanded the assailant be released into his custody, but at Moley's insistence, the guards led away the young man—who turned out to be an accredited member of the Cuban delegation.

When Calzon came to, U.N. security officials told him that a crowd of pro-Castro delegates had gathered around shouting and had tried to kick him where he lay on the floor. Another Swiss guard had pulled a mace canister and cleared the area.

"There was a provocation from Frank Calzon against one woman in the Cuban delegation," said Mora Godoy later, employing a charge he has lobbed at other U.N. diplomats. Ambassador Moley filed a statement and has said he wants to press charges. Since everyone involved has diplomatic immunity, however, it is unlikely the Cuban delegate can expect anything worse than ejection from the country by the Swiss.

In his official report of the assault, U.S. delegation head Richard Williamson cites "a series of incidents and intimidation" by the Cuban delegation. The attack on Calzon was the fourth provocation directed toward members of the U.S. delegation during the session that ended on Friday. The others, as related by Williamson, included a drive-by threat ("We're watching you") and a "scuffle" over position papers that had to be broken up by a guard. Freedom House representatives chime in with their own stories of chest tapping and muttered menace.

Jeane Kirkpatrick, who headed last year's U.S. delegation to Geneva, says of Cuba's unusual behavior, "They have an obsessive desire to control the symbolic environment in which they live." In the case of Frank Calzon, who has long been her colleague and friend, "someone, some speech escaped their control. . . . It's enormously difficult for them to bear."

"They're very effective," says Kirkpatrick, "at making common cause with other dictatorships in U.N. bodies where they hang out." The issue that presumably pushed the Cuban delegate to violence was a resolution brought before the commission by Honduras. It asked Cuba to admit a U.N. human rights inspector and "deplored" the treatment of 75 dissidents jailed last March, many under sentences of 20 years or more. The vote on the resolution was close, 22-21. Russia and China joined Cuba and several African countries in voting no, and 10 members abstained, including Paraguay, Brazil, and Argentina.

Though the annual Cuba resolution generally does not contain the word "condemn" and is phrased in positive (or positively Orwellian, depending on who you ask) terms, Cuba regularly wages a year-long campaign against it and sends a "huge" delegation, says Mark Falcoff, a scholar at the American Enterprise Institute and a member of last year's U.S. delegation. Approximately 25 delegates from Cuba descend on Geneva to fill four seats in the chamber, along with a huge crowd of secondary participants from Cuban non-governmental organizations and media.

How do all those extra people in the entourage fill their days? "Some are translators; winning over Russian diplomats takes lots of chatting," says Falcoff. The rest? Well, they might not exactly be diplomats by training. Cuban embassies and missions have long housed agents of the DGI, Cuba's answer to the KGB, and Cuba regularly accredits NGOs that are actually state organs, like the Federation of Cuban Women, for participation at the U.N. Rumors about DGI agents with diplomatic passports were confirmed by one of the highest ranking defectors from Cuba, Alcibiades Hidalgo, who was fired from his position as Cuban ambassador to the U.N. in 1993 after he objected to the use of Cuba's diplomatic mission as home base for its intelligence operation. Soon after, he fled to the United States.

Also present in large numbers at the commission's annual six-week session are cameras from the Cuban state press. Falcoff says, "Cuba regards this as a terribly important event, though I

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can't imagine they give two hoots about what the U.N. thinks." After the resolution passes every year, Castro reliably declares that it doesn't apply to him. The events at the commission may be "a psychodrama staged for Cuban television," ventures Falcoff. Cuba makes use of the "theater" in Geneva to soothe the "insecurities that all undemocratic governments feel."

Castro recently turned down offers of a more favorable tariff status and extra humanitarian aid from the E.U. because Europe insisted that human rights inspectors be allowed into Cuba as a condition of the deals. Castro also refuses access to and regularly denounces Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the Red Cross, and other human rights groups.

He may be wise to do so. Kirkpatrick, Falcoff, and Calzon make the same point from slightly different angles: Castro would love nothing more than to reach beyond Cuba's shores and suppress all criticism of his regime, to control discussion about his policies and practices totally. That, as Kirkpatrick notes, "is the essence of totalitarianism." But when he extended his efforts to squash dissent into the lobby of the Human Rights Commission in Geneva, history suggests Castro may have done his cause more harm than good.

In 1856, Senator Charles Sumner, a Massachusetts Republican, was severely beaten with a metal-topped cane by Congressman Preston Brooks, kin to one of the senators whose pro-slavery stance Sumner had denounced two days before in a powerful speech on the floor. Brooks, like the young Cuban, snuck up on his victim from behind. And like the Cuban assailant, Brooks suffered little more than formal censure for his actions. It took Sumner almost three years to recover from the bloody assault, but today the incident is in every high school history book, alongside the words that had stirred the ire of the pro-slavery faction: "What are trial by jury, habeas corpus, the ballot-box, the right of petition, the liberty of Kansas, your liberty, sir, or mine, to one who lends himself, not merely to the support at home, but to the propagandism abroad, of that preposterous wrong, which denies even the right of a man to himself! Such a cause can be maintained only by a practical subversion of all rights."

Sumner warned that failure to do the right thing about slavery would sully the Senate's "good name in history forever more." Calzon similarly underlines the contrast between the sordid assault and the exalted mission of the place where it happened, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. Coming just after debate about whether allegations of repressive practices in Cuba were true, the attack, Calzon said, was "an example that cannot be ignored. This did not happen in the middle of the night in a dark alley."

Moley expanded on that theme to the *Miami Herald*, one of the few news outlets to cover the story: "It was a vicious punch. If you act that way in the U.N. . . . God forbid, what do you do in your own country where there is absolutely no accountability?"

Frank Calzon knows. "If I was attacked in Cuba," he said, "it would have been more than one punch." ♦

Ariel Sharon's Gamble

Is there safety behind a wall?

BY DANIEL DORON

Jerusalem

FROM THE SIMPLISTIC accounts in the American press, you might think Israelis are uniformly delighted over President Bush's support for Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's disengagement plan —the unilateral withdrawal from all Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip and from several in Judea and Samaria. In fact, there are passionate arguments here over the meaning of Bush's extraordinary statement of U.S. commitment to Israel.

Arguments are heated because the Bush letter is all the compensation Israel will get for its dramatic withdrawal; there is no Palestinian quid pro quo. Sharon's U.S. visit was openly tied to his effort to rally skeptical members of his Likud party, which will hold a referendum on the disengagement policy on May 2.

Daniel Doron is director of the Israel Center for Social and Economic Progress, an independent pro-market policy think tank.

Most Israelis realize, of course, that President Bush is a true friend of Israel. But skeptics question whether the Bush letter really goes beyond traditional U.S. positions, as Sharon and his supporters insist, and whether the risks of unilateral withdrawal can therefore be justified. The Palestinians, they say, may interpret Israel's pullback as a victory for terrorism. Like the withdrawal from south Lebanon—a reasonable act in itself—pulling out of Gaza may inspire further terrorism in hopes Israel will make additional concessions.

The naysayers focus on two major issues, which they fear the Bush letter did not put to rest: the Arab insistence that the hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees and their millions of descendants be granted a "right of return" to their homes in what is now Israel, and their demand that all Jewish settlements on what are purported to be former Palestinian lands be vacated.

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(The naysayers argue, for instance, that while Bush spoke of the need to settle the refugees in a future Palestinian state, he refrained from adding a definitive "and not in Israel," using instead the more ambiguous phrase "rather than in Israel.")

Despite such worries, Sharon seems to have convinced the greater part of his party, including three key ministers who had been reticent—Finance Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Minister of Education Limor Livnat, and Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom—to support his disengagement plan. But the outcome is by no means certain.

While this debate attests to the vibrancy of Israeli democracy, it may unfortunately distract Israeli decision-makers from their most urgent task, namely winning the war on terror. Israelis are divided on most issues, and especially on those pertaining to a final settlement with the Palestinians, yet on the crucial issue of how to fight terrorism a thoughtless consensus has taken hold. Israel's failure to curb terrorism has tempted an exhausted public to grab at any straw of security offered—hence the embrace of a wall separating Israel from the Palestinians of the West Bank.

Despite recent tactical victories, such as the killing of terrorist masterminds Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and Abdel Aziz Rantisi, Israel has on the whole adopted a defensive strategy. Many in the Israeli army, like the political elites, have convinced themselves against all evidence that terrorism cannot be vanquished by force. They elaborated a "limited engagement" strategy and devised "low-intensity war" tactics that imposed disabling limitations on their war against terrorism. It took Israel years before it started targeting top terrorist leaders, and even now it does not do so systematically enough.

The overwhelming consensus in support of the wall does not bode well for Israel's success in overcoming terrorism. Walls have been and will continue to be breached. So while a wall may significantly reduce the number of terrorist incidents, it cannot prevent—as its supporters readily admit—all terrorist attacks. More critically, it cannot ensure that the few terror incidents that will take place in spite of the wall's existence will not include one or two mega-attacks causing immense damage and casualties.

Strategically, therefore, the wall has limited usefulness, and it comes with very high costs. It may in fact end up reducing Israel's ability to fight terrorism effectively. The costs are not just the obvious ones of construction and maintenance. It will also be costly to defend. Quick response units will be needed to repulse attempts to breach it.

The consensus around the wall has another major drawback. Walls have a tendency to create a Maginot Line mentality. The separation may also end up inhibiting Israel's access to intelligence sources.

The consensus around the wall has another major drawback. Walls have a tendency to create a Maginot Line mentality. The Bar Lev line Israel erected along the Suez canal after 1967 was first a series of outposts designed to serve as tripwires and direct Israeli mobile armor units to where the Egyptians might attempt to cross the canal. Heavy Egyptian shelling forced Israel to transform them into fortified strongholds. Protecting these strongholds then gradually shifted Israeli strategy into a defensive posture. This shift played a role in the disaster that befell Israeli forces in the first days of the Yom Kippur War in 1973.

The separation wall may also end up inhibiting Israel's access to intelligence sources that have contributed greatly to foiling so many terrorist acts. It might furthermore limit the ability of Israeli forces to move even in hot pursuit into the West Bank and Gaza, since each such breach by Israel of a wall it has created will be criticized and will put Israel on the defensive.

But the wall's greatest drawback is that it punishes the innocent along with the guilty, and often instead of them. The wall will worsen the already miserable condition of the Arab population upon which terrorist organizations thrive. It will abandon the Palestinian Arab population, many of whom do not support terrorism, to the mercy of a corrupt and irredentist leadership that has proven its willingness to immiserate the population and then transform the desperation it has created into deep hatred for Israel and to terrorist attacks. (Before Oslo brought Arafat and his terrorist minions to the West Bank and Gaza, hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs worked in Israel, yet you could count terror incidents on one hand.)

Peace can only come when a new Palestinian leadership, emerging from a civil society, replaces the Oslo-imposed criminals and terrorists of the Palestinian Authority. Only then could a Palestinian leader make compromises for peace the way the Israelis are willing to do. As long as Arafat and his partners hold sway among the Palestinians, any alternative peace-seeking leadership is doomed to death.

So it is Israel's failure to systematically eradicate terrorism, by destroying its infrastructure, its organizations, and its leadership that is, paradoxically, the greatest obstacle to peace. As in Iraq—half measures will not do. They only prolong the agony and cause unnecessary massive suffering, not only for Israelis, but for the Palestinian Arabs too. ♦

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A Few More Good Men

What's needed to defeat the Iraqi insurgents.

BY FREDERICK W. KAGAN

EVERYTHING WE KNOW about fighting an insurgency like the one in Iraq suggests that a large part of the answer is to crush the insurgents as thoroughly and rapidly as possible. And when it comes to counterinsurgency, there is no substitute for U.S. troops—and lots of them. Why, then, does there seem to be a bipartisan consensus in Washington to avoid this hard truth?

At the Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearings on Iraq last week, former Bush administration adviser Richard Perle testified that the "problem is not that we have too few troops, but that the Iraqis have too few well-trained, highly motivated troops and security forces." Sandy Berger weighed in for the Kerry camp at the same hearings in favor of "internationalizing" the military effort, adding that "more troops and more money is not a strategy." Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld meantime said that the administration is not considering sending more troops to Iraq now, although it is preparing to do so if it seems necessary down the road. Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz said, "It's hard to conceive that it would take more forces to provide stability in post-Saddam Iraq than it would take to conduct the war itself and to secure the surrender of Saddam's security forces and his army. Hard to imagine."

Is it possible Washington has learned nothing about the nature of insurgencies? Surely the relationship between American troop levels and the U.S. ability to train Iraqi soldiers to take over security is not that hard to grasp.

Counterinsurgency operations are inevitably troop-intensive. Soldiers must accomplish four major tasks simultaneously: (1) guarding fixed points, including cities, command posts, diplomatic compounds, etc.; (2) sealing the frontiers to prevent aid and foreign fighters from reinforcing the insurgents; (3) protecting supply lines, which insurgents like to attack because they are the softest military targets available; and finally (4) attacking the insurgents directly. The trouble is that the first three tasks are primarily defensive. The counterinsurgent can succeed in all of them without suppressing the insurgency. Only the fourth task really advances the counterinsurgent campaign, but the other three inevitably siphon off a large proportion of the available combat power.

Since the Bush administration is rightly serious about creating local Iraqi organs capable of maintaining themselves in power after the upcoming transition, U.S. forces must also train Iraqi soldiers and police. Only in the long term, though, will these new Iraqi forces reduce the need for U.S. troops. At the moment, that task also requires significant numbers of American forces, because it takes soldiers to train soldiers (and also to protect them while they are being trained).

The more coalition troops are drawn into a fight against insurgents, the fewer will be available to support this critical training. The more the Iraqis see real combat in their streets, the fewer Iraqi troops will be ready to take the field alone, or even with American troops alongside them. Until coalition forces get the insurgency under control, in other words, it is highly unlikely that the training of Iraqi forces will reach the necessary levels of quality and quantity.

But can the coalition get the insurgency under control with the forces it now has available? Only if it is very, very lucky. A wise strategy would be to immediately dispatch at least six more combat brigades (about 40,000 troops with their necessary support groups), sending one each to Falluja, Karbala, Najaf, and Mosul, one to strengthen the patrols along the Iranian border (we might even need one more along the Syrian border, given the recent violence there), and one for a reserve. We can already see sufficient dangers in these areas to warrant preventive reinforcements. If we increase our presence now, we might be able to deter new problems, with increased patrolling, and to solve some old ones—including the standoff with Moktada al-Sadr that has been allowed to drag on very dangerously.

Neither the Bush administration nor its critics seem to want to acknowledge that wars and counterinsurgencies are made up of a string of fleeting opportunities that, once past, can never be recovered. The coalition has received ample warning of the possibility of widespread violence erupting suddenly in Iraq. By sending more troops now, we stand a fair chance of preventing an explosion. If we wait until it has occurred, the prospects for success in Iraq will have dimmed dramatically.

More troops and more money may not, in themselves, be a strategy. Any sound strategy for dealing with the problems in Iraq today, however, will have to begin with more troops. A paucity of American forces in Iraq has been the central problem of U.S. policy since before the war began. It remains the central problem today. Until it is resolved, the outlook will remain grim. ♦

Frederick W. Kagan is a military historian and the coauthor of While America Sleeps.

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The U.N. Brings Trouble to Kosovo

How two Americans died at the hands of their fellow U.N. police. BY STEPHEN SCHWARTZ

On April 17, two American women were killed by a Jordanian in Kosovo. With all media eyes focused on Iraq, little notice has been taken of their sacrifice, yet Kim Bigley, 47, of Paducah, Ky., and Lynn Williams, 48, of Elmont, N.Y., apparently fell as casualties in the war on terrorism.

Like the American contract employees murdered this month in Falluja, and the American journalist executed in Pakistan in 2002, and the American missionary killed in the Philippines in 2003, these women had voluntarily traveled to a dangerous Muslim-majority region to do constructive work. They were members of a U.N. police contingent assigned to Mitrovica, a scrubby, dusty, ugly town that last made world news in March, when the drowning of three Albanian boys there triggered ethnic violence across Kosovo that killed 28.

As best one can piece together the facts from local and international news sources, the women were leaving a prison where they had been undergoing police training along with U.N. colleagues—in a group of 21 Americans, 2 Turks, and an Austrian—when they came under fire from Jordanian U.N. police on duty at the prison gate. Fire was returned, and Sergeant Major Ahmed Mustafa Ibrahim Ali—who had been the first to fire, according to the Associated Press—was killed. Four more Jordanian U.N. policemen have been arrested, and their immunity in the province has been lifted. In addition to the dead, four Americans were wounded in what is described as a 10-minute "shootout" or "gun battle."

Agence France Presse / STR

EPA Photos / Armando Babani

After the shootout (above); an April 22 memorial service in Kosovo

An unnamed American police officer told Agence France-Presse that the Middle Easterners had shouted at the Americans that the United States had invaded Iraq and every other country. The same account claimed the Americans shouted back, and the Jordanians started shooting. Reuters, citing "police sources at the scene," also reported that the fight was about Iraq. Both Reuters and AP quoted American police officers as describing a deliberate attack on Americans.

Mustafa Ibrahim Ali, father of the dead man, was quoted as saying his son "was not living on Mars, and he was affected by what is happening in the Palestinian territories and Iraq." According to the *New York Times*, Ahmed Mustafa Ibrahim Ali was an ethnic Palestinian.

Rather than Mars, Ali was living in Kosovo, where he and other foreign police are supposedly helping protect the majority-Albanian population. Conventional wisdom is that foreign Muslims make a special contribution to an international force policing a majority-Muslim people. This latest episode isn't the only indication that that assumption is wrong. Late in 2002, an Egyptian member of the U.N. police in Kosovo shot and killed his Albanian female interpreter, which inflamed residents against the Arab police.

The murder of the Americans by the Jordanian led to harsh commentary in the local media. Veton Surroi, publisher of the Kosovar daily *Koha Ditore*, described Kosovo as a study in contrasts. Although it is European, and

Stephen Schwartz, a frequent contributor, worked in Kosovo for most of 2000.

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"almost the most pro-American [place] in Europe," it has "a vast Islamic religious and cultural underpinning." Now, Surroi wrote, Kosovar Albanians must deal with an imported conflict they never wanted: between the Americans who sacrificed to liberate Iraq from Saddam but were met by terrorism from an ungrateful population, and Jordanians who see Americans as modern colonialists driven by oil.

U.N. secretary general Kofi Annan expressed his regrets at the deadly clash, and promised that charges would be brought against the four Jordanians under arrest if sufficient evidence against them emerges from an investigation. But another prominent Albanian newspaperman, Blerim Shala of the daily *Zeri*, said the incident dramatized the need for reform of the U.N. police in Kosovo.

The poor quality of U.N. policing in Kosovo illustrates in turn the broader perils of U.N. administration in contested territories—including Iraq, where many opponents of American "unilateralism" would like to see the U.N. take over peacekeeping, using large police and army contingents from Muslim countries.

Of some 53 countries sending officers to police Kosovo, the United States has contributed the largest number—571 in 2001, the last year for which figures are available. Pakistan, riven by Islamist extremism, sent 235 that year, Turkey 114, Bangladesh 101, Egypt 64, and Malaysia 49. According to the Jordanian embassy, the Jordanian contingent is currently 360.

Bujar Bukoshi, a Kosovar Albanian politician, has called for all the Jordanians to leave the province. At present, it might be a good idea to retire all foreign Muslim police and troops from Kosovo, with the possible exception of the Turks and Malaysians, whose professionalism stands out. Meanwhile, it's clearly an even better idea for the world to pay closer attention to U.N. policies in Kosovo as examples not to follow in Iraq. ♦

After the Arab League

Solidarity begins to yield to reality.

BY AMIR TAHERI

"SHOULD THE ARABS abandon their dream of unity and join NATO?" That improbable question came, in a burst of anger over the cancellation of the Arab League summit last month, from Amr Moussa, secretary-general of the league, after Tunisia called off the meeting it was to have hosted.

If Moussa's rhetoric was intended to shame the Arabs into closing ranks and fixing a new date for the summit, he was disappointed. Many Arab states are persuaded that the league is dead and—amazingly enough—are starting to talk of associating themselves not only with NATO, but with the World Trade Organization and the European Union as well.

Sure enough, Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, and Jordan are already on course to sign formal partnership agreements with NATO at the alliance's June summit in Istanbul. Libya, currently undertaking a complete rethink of its foreign policy, has expressed interest in "some form of cooperation" with NATO. Preliminary talks are planned for Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, and Kuwait to develop links with NATO in the next few years. And Ali Abdul-Amir Allawi, the Iraqi defense minister, has indicated that his newly liberated nation's strategy will be based on "close alliance with democratic nations, including those grouped in NATO."

"The collapse of the Tunis summit, now tentatively rescheduled for May 22, has led to what looks like a stampede," says a senior Kuwaiti official. "We now realize that, by grouping together, the Arabs have been preventing one another from contemplating long overdue reforms."

Although Egypt's president, Hosni Mubarak, described the cancellation of the Tunis summit as a catastrophe, several other Arab leaders view it as a blessing in disguise. Judging by a draft of the cancelled summit's proposed final declaration, they may be closer to the truth than Mubarak. The 4,000-word draft—leaked to the Arab press, presumably by the Tunisians—reveals an Arab leadership paralyzed by fear of the future and hanging on for dear life to timeworn clichés.

Thus, the draft allocates a little over 300 words to a pompously entitled "Charter of Reform of the Arab World." This turns out to be a hodgepodge of contradictory pledges and pious hopes that the summiteers must have known would be taken seriously by no one. The issue of women, for example, is brushed off in 20 words, while the vital fight against international terrorism gets all of 30 words, 22 of them insisting that the term "terrorism" does not apply to anything done by "the Palestinian resistance movements." By contrast, the draft devotes 156 words to a dispute between Iran and the United Arab Emirates over three islands in the Persian Gulf.

None of the dramatic changes in the world in recent decades is reflected in the draft. In fact, with few modifications, it could have been presented at any of the 15 Arab summits held so far. Its authors, in other words, are in a state of denial.

They do not realize that with the end of the Cold War, they can no

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longer play one bloc against another to ensure their day-to-day survival. Nor do they register the impact on public opinion in the major democracies of the September 11 attacks on the United States. They cannot see how out of place the Arab economic system, dominated by a corrupt and inefficient public sector, appears in an age of open markets and globalization. More surprising still is the failure of the authors to understand the effect of the demographic explosion on Arab societies. Nor do they appreciate the significance of a new and growing class of urban, educated, and unemployed youths or the rising awareness among women of their potential power.

Whatever usefulness the Arab League ever had, it clearly is not helping the Arabs come to grips with the two key questions facing them: how to find a place in a world that was not designed by them and that they do not control; and how to reform their political processes to reflect the needs and aspirations of increasingly vocal middle classes in a context of power-sharing.

Because the Arab states are at different stages of development and face different internal and external challenges, no single strategy suits all 22 members of the Arab League. This is hardly surprising: The European Union, a far more cohesive and deep-rooted partnership of nations, has trouble enough moving its members' economic and foreign policies toward convergence. But the result, for the Arabs, has been to slow down reform through inertia and a quest for the lowest common denominator favoring the most conservative members of the league.

Instead, if they are serious about reform, the Arab nations have two options. The first is to develop national strategies based on each country's needs and potentials. On the issue of equality for women, for example, Morocco is far ahead of, say, Oman, although both are monarchies. In Algeria the aspiration for free elections is far stronger than it is in Libya, although both are labeled republics. Jordan, which has always had a capitalist system, is better able to find a place in the global market economy than is its neighbor Syria, with its decades-old Soviet-style command economy. It is easier for the United Arab Emirates, always an open society, to accept ideas like the free circulation of people and capital than it is for Egypt, which has always been obsessed with security.

The second option the Arab states have is to link up with other groupings of nation-states, thus broadening the context of their quest for reform. Several Arab states, including Egypt, Morocco, and Jordan, have already joined the World Trade Organization (WTO). And the North African Arab nations and Jordan have developed a form of association with the European Union through its Euro-Mediterranean dialogue. In every case, association with a larger international organization has forced the Arab states to introduce reforms they would have been unable or unwilling to risk on their own. The partnership-for-peace type arrangement envisaged between NATO and the Arab states goes beyond military matters. The economic advantages include easier access to North American and European Union markets, and a package of scientific and cultural joint programs is under discussion.

While these new ties may help put some Arab countries on the path of reform, a broader effort is still needed. This could come in the form of a dialogue between the Arab states and the major democracies. The aim should be to commit the Arab states to economic, social, and political reforms and standards of behavior that none would be capable of introducing alone.

The historic precedent is the talks that led to the Helsinki Accords between the democracies and the Soviet bloc in the 1970s. Some Arab leaders reject the comparison, arguing that the Arab League does not constitute an anti-West bloc, as did the Soviet camp during the Cold War. While this is technically true, the fact remains that the most immediate threat to the democratic world today comes from radical and terrorist movements rooted in Arab societies. It may be possible to contain these movements through more efficient police work and, when necessary, military intervention. In the long run, however, the best way to kill the monster of terror is through genuine change in the Arab world.

Within the next 100 days the issue will be discussed at the NATO summit in Turkey and the G-8 summit in the United States. The United States and its allies could use both forums to invite the Arabs into a dialogue for peace and partnership aimed at reform and democratization as well as economic development and security.

The Arab peoples need reform and democratization to save themselves from poverty, despotism, and violence. The United States and its democratic allies have a stake in that: Democracy in the Arab countries could mean greater security for the West. ♦

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Bob Woodward's Washington

The books come and go, but the plot is always the same—vanity, duplicity, flattery, and guile.

By Andrew Ferguson

Washington went through one of its Woodward spasms last week. It unwound in the usual manner. First came the faint, premonitory rumors, gaining force as the publishing date approached, about what might be in Bob Woodward's latest book; then the suggestive news reports dribbled out over the premiere weekend, until one news organization or another boldly broke the publisher's embargo, followed by stories about the story that broke the embargo. At last on Sunday there was the television kickoff on *60 Minutes*, in which Woodward himself tugged the shroud from his new production in front of a gaping Mike Wallace, and the hungry devouring of the first of the multi-part excerpts in the *Washington Post*. Inevitably, as the week wore on, there came the sad detumescence, settling in around Excerpt Three or maybe Four, when we realized that the good parts had all been published and only the scraps and crumbs were left. Soon enough the book itself would be here, in piles in the window at Borders, limp as a windsock and giving off the stale odor of old news.

It has the reassuring cadence of ritual, a Woodward spasm does, and like a ritual it will disclose unexpected revelations. During the last spasm, for example, launched by the publication of Woodward's *Bush at War* 16 months ago, I recall marveling at the verbatim quotes from President Bush. By tradition Woodward seldom quotes a source directly, with attribution, as conventional reporters do. Yet here was Bush—who at the time had just polished off one war and was suiting up for another—overcoming his famous disdain for reporters to sit for a two-hour interview with the greatest reporter of them all. Much of what he said was even more remarkable. He was asked to summarize the contribution made by his secretary of state, Colin Powell, to the war in Afghanistan. "Powell is a diplomat," Bush said mildly, "and you've got to have a diplomat. . . . He is a diplomatic person who has got war experience."

The praise was notable for how faint it was; dismissive, almost, and revealing in the inadvertent way that Woodward's books always are. Bush is a self-confident man—self-confident enough to denigrate, slyly and publicly, the veteran public servant who sits as his secretary of state. But he's not self-confident enough to say no when Bob Woodward asks if he's got two hours to chat. Cockiness has its limits, even with Bush. This is Woodward's town; the president just lives in it.

With the excerpts from *Plan of Attack* published last week, Woodward proved that he had outdone himself yet again—or rather, his sources had outdone themselves in his service. This time, the president sat for more than three hours of interviews, and Powell himself seems to have given Woodward access to everything but his clothes hamper and the videotapes stashed in his bedroom closet. Administration spokesmen boasted that Bush had ordered his aides and cabinet officers to cooperate with Woodward, and they brandish the resulting book as though it were a campaign placard.

"We're urging people to buy the book," said the White House communications director, Dan Bartlett. "What this book does is show a president who was asking the right questions and showing prudence as well as resolve during very difficult times. This book undermines a lot of the critics' charges."

Well, maybe it does, but the sight of a White House humping a Woodward book is an interesting development all by itself. I'm showing my age, but I remember when Republicans hated Bob Woodward. It all began with Watergate, of course, when Woodward and his partner Carl Bernstein dragged the bloodied body of Richard Nixon from the White House and martyred him on the

Andrew Ferguson is a senior editor at The Weekly Standard.

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front page of the *Post*. Hostilities intensified with a book about the Iran-contra scandal, *Veil*, in which Woodward claimed to have snagged a deathbed interview with William Casey, Ronald Reagan's director of central intelligence. Though few people could translate Casey's mumbles even when he was healthy, Woodward said he palavered with the old spook as he lay in a hospital room, wreathed in tubes and half-paralyzed from a stroke. By his account, Woodward asked Casey why he had orchestrated the scandal, and (said Woodward) Casey said: "I believed."

Republicans didn't. By the late 1980s, in that pitiless, binary ledger kept by Washington's professional conservatives, Woodward was the enemy.

Then, suddenly, it appeared that Woodward was becoming more—um, *objective*. *The Commanders*, Woodward's behind-the-scenes account of the Gulf War, showed a masterly George H.W. Bush manipulating the geopolitical map like Kasparov at a chessboard, faithfully attended by Powell, Dick Cheney, and America's Metternich, James Baker III. In *The Man Who Would be President*, Woodward teamed up with David Broder to sketch a portrait of Dan Quayle as a Hoosier Pericles. Really, Dan Quayle. *The Choice* and *The Agenda*, Woodward's backstage peeks at Bill Clinton's White House, did as much as any piece of Gingrichian agitprop to solidify that administration's reputation as a clownshow of fops and incompetents.

Hey, thought Republicans: Maybe we've been a little hard on old Bob. And of course they had. No one has ever successfully challenged Woodward's overall journalistic credibility. Of the hundreds of thousands of discrete facts his books are built from, few have required correction. He advances no ideological agenda; he seems indifferent to political ideas of any kind, beyond the soft liberalism he has absorbed from his social class. His goal is plainly what he has said it is all along: He wants to record how Washington really works as faithfully and accurately as possible. He does, too—though not in the way he thinks. His books are the truth about Washington. You just have to read between the lines.

What's in the lines themselves can be highly frustrating. Woodward came of age, professionally, during the false spring of New Journalism, when gifted reporters and writers like Tom Wolfe and Gay Talese used storytelling techniques—dialogue, scene-setting, psychological detail—to turn their "saturation reporting" into compelling narratives. In the right hands (very few in number) the result can be exhilarating. Woodward is at once New Journalism's most successful practitioner, commercially, and its most dubious, stylistically. Reading the books, with their clunky prose and indiscriminate wash of detail, or watching him moonlight as a TV talking head with Larry King or Tim Russert, repeating banalities plucked whole from that day's conventional wisdom, you can't help but conclude that he is a kind of idiot savant—a dim bulb with a single, very large gift.

The books, perhaps necessarily, are slapdash concoctions. In the transcript of an interview released last week by the Pentagon, Woodward is quoted telling Donald Rumsfeld, "I want to construct a narrative, because that's the only way you can communicate to a large body of people what happened." Grand, even operatic, narrative is his ambition, but he doesn't write well enough to pull it off. He can't set a scene to dramatic effect or assemble detail to round out a character. He is incapable of psychological penetration. As with most boomer journalists, his historical knowledge shows no sign of extending beyond the oeuvre of Doris Kearns Goodwin, Michael Beschloss, and the rest of the faculty at Charlie Rose Tech.

He relies instead on a lower order of storytelling. Pressed through the filter of Woodward's melodramatic sensibility, the affairs of state—ideological disputes, international consultations, briefing sessions, bureaucratic snafus—take on the tone and temper of a furious battle among high school cliques. His storylines turn on emotional encounters. In *Plan of Attack* we learn that Colin and Dick used to be friends, but now Colin thinks Dick has been saying bad things to the president, and Dick gets so mad at Colin that the two of them stop speaking. And sometimes they fight: "They both knew how to score debating points as they pulled apart the last fraying threads of what had connected them for so many years." But then Rich Armitage, a sidekick in Colin's group, gets mad at Condi, and he tells her so, right to her face, and Condi gets so mad at Rich for what he said to her that she goes straight to Colin to complain. Colin defends Rich because they're best friends. And what about the president? How does he feel about Colin? Does he like Colin better than Dick? It makes you want to transfer to a cooler school.

The narratives are so coarse in a Woodward book, and the prose so clumsy, that often you can't be sure what's going on, precisely—you can't tell what detail derives from Woodward's actual reporting and what is merely surmise, or a contrivance inserted to goose along the melodrama. In *Bush at War*, we get to sit inside Powell's cranium as the secretary ponders the president. There are many passages like this:

"Bush might order, Go get the guns! Get my horses! —all the Texas, Alamo macho that made Powell uncomfortable."

Whoa, hoss. Them's fightin' words, ain't they? But which words are Powell's and which are Woodward's? Is

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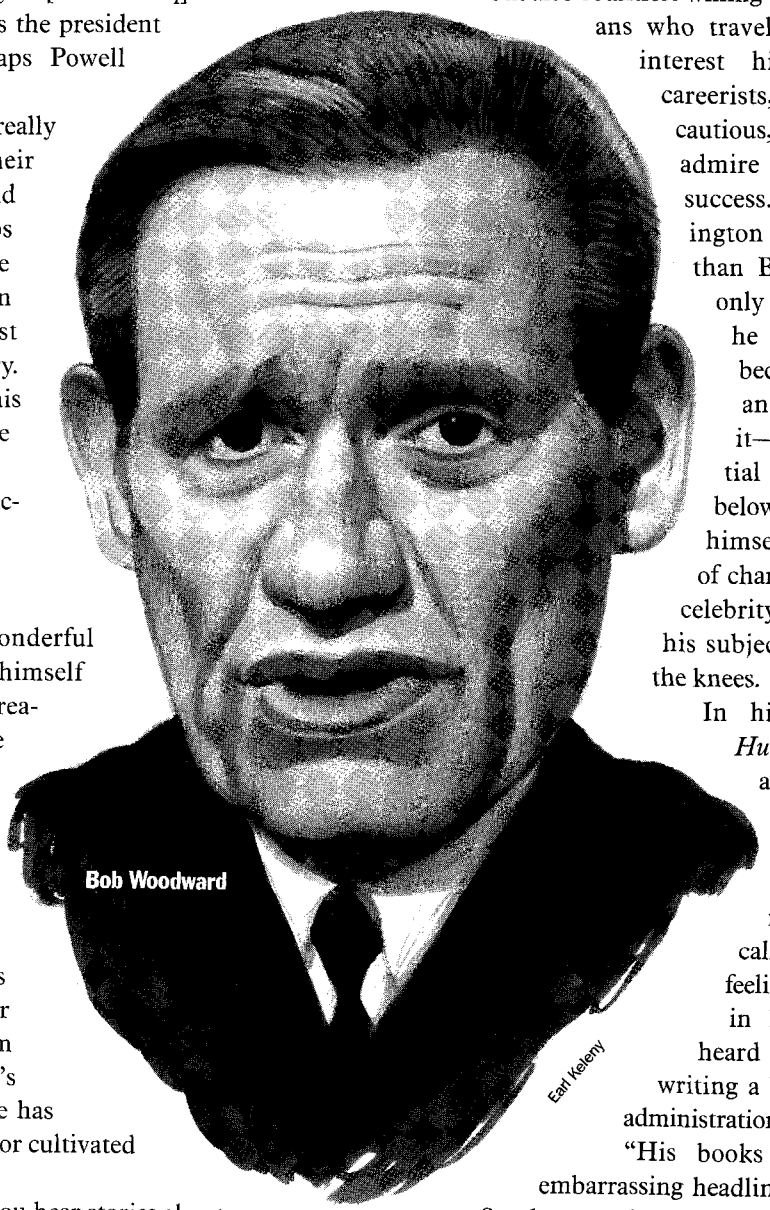
the sentiment Powell's and the wording Woodward's? Does Powell think the president is sometimes hasty—which wouldn't be terribly alarming—or does he think the president succumbs to "Alamo macho," which would be alarming indeed? The two tendencies are not the same, after all, and the difference is important.

And where—to take an example from the new book—do asides like this come from: "The president had never once asked Powell, Would you [invade Iraq]?" Woodward writes. "Perhaps the president feared the answer. Perhaps Powell feared giving it."

Perhaps the president really did tell Woodward in their interview that he was afraid of Powell's answer. Perhaps Powell told Woodward he was afraid to offer it. Then again, perhaps this is just Woodward being literary. Perhaps, in other words, this is baloney. The point is, we have no way of knowing. Which is a problem in a factual account.


Bob Woodward

Earl Keleny

It would indeed be a wonderful thing, and Woodward himself would be a national treasure, if he could record the events that interest him with greater precision, and with an eye to their larger psychological or historical or political placement. But he can't. Instead his gift—solitary, as I say, but very large—is for getting people to tell him stuff. This is the reporter's essential talent, and no one has ever had it in such quantity or cultivated it so diligently.

Living in Washington, you hear stories about how he does it—about the long preliminary interviews he conducts with his sources-to-be, prefaced always by exhaustive research, during which he oozes Uriah Heepish empathy, and then the follow-ups, the second and third interviews, studded with long silences, downcast eyes, shrugs of disappointment, as his sources grow increasingly uncomfortable till they blurt out whatever it is he wants to know. On top of it all, Woodward is tireless and industrious and exquisitely careful with numbers and dates, and his threshold for boredom is unimaginably high. The government memo was never written that Bob Woodward could not read and reread with relish—so long as it was none of his business.

Yet reportorial genius is only part of the story of Woodward's success. He has spawned countless imitators, but also countless willing victims. Washingtonians who travel in the circles that interest him are implacable careerists, by turns toadying, cautious, and pushy, and they admire nothing so much as success. And who in Washington is more successful than Bob Woodward? Not only is he the best at what he does, he has also become exceedingly rich and famous for doing it—a man whose celestial ranking rests just below that of the president himself. His combination of charm, professional skill, celebrity, and wealth renders his subjects uniquely weak in the knees.

In his memoir *All Too Human*, George Stephanopoulos, a former aide to Bill Clinton and himself a poster boy for Washington careerism, recalls the strange mix of feelings that overtook him in 1993, when he first heard that Woodward was writing a book on the Clinton administration's economic policy. "His books invariably created embarrassing headlines for their subject," Stephanopoulos wrote, "but [such a big but!] his sources were assumed to be the most important, connected, and knowledgeable people in Washington. . . . Woodward's first call to me had sparked two simultaneous thoughts: *Oh no!* and *I have arrived.*"

Stephanopoulos sang like a canary, of course. "Woodward's calculated charm was custom tailored to my intellectual vanity, professional pride, and personal loyalty to the

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president." Well, maybe not the loyalty part. *The Agenda* did indeed "create embarrassing headlines" for Clinton, some of which he would not overcome for years, and it led directly to the firing of Mack McLarty, Stephanopoulos's boss. George himself managed to come out all right.

Not all of Woodward's sources do, of course. There are many biases in the books, none of them political. One bias is toward people who agree to talk to the author. Another is toward people who agree to talk to him in a particular way. Because the story lines that Woodward constructs pivot to a large extent on emotion, on feelings and intimate interaction, sources who disgorge their inner lives will always come out ahead. The undisputed hero of the last several Woodward books has been Colin Powell, whose inner life, as recorded there, is exquisite. He worries and frets, he feels blue ("I was disappointed, even hurt . . ." we read in *Plan of Attack*), he feels elation, he summons resolve against long odds. President Bush too—Alamo macho though he may sometimes seem—is happy to talk the talk. "I felt stressed," he tells Woodward in *Plan of Attack*. "My jaw muscle got so tight. . . . There was a lot of tension during that last holiday season." You can only imagine the silent *Yessssssss!* that raced through the reporter's brain when his president began to talk like that.

Woodward gently prodded the defense secretary to do a little soul-searching: "What was the most important moment in this [war] for you personally?"

As for those prigs who remain uncomfortable with the confessional mode of speech, and who don't want a reporter poking around their private selves—such characters will inevitably suffer in the telling of a Woodward tale. It's not clear from last week's excerpts whether Dick Cheney agreed to be interviewed, but even if he did, it is unlikely that he disclosed the inner Dick in the manner of Powell's inner Colin. (*Cheney thought Condi had been awfully standoffish at the briefing last night . . .*) The transcripts of the Rumsfeld-Woodward interviews released by the Pentagon show Woodward gently prodding the defense secretary to do a little soul-searching. "What was the most important moment in this [war] for you personally?" Woodward asks at the end of one interview. "Oh, I don't know," Rumsfeld responds, with evident impatience. "We're over time. . . . Let's talk process." Stoics like Cheney and Rumsfeld, caught in the light that Woodward shines on his subjects, appear opaque, taciturn, unfeeling—hence unsympathetic, and vaguely sinister.

Other sources come off badly for reasons of which they are not, perhaps, fully aware. Many personal qualities go into the making of a Washington careerist. Self-knowledge is not one of them. That lack opens another vulnerability that Woodward is happy to exploit. One of last week's *Post* excerpts began with an account of a small dinner party Cheney gave last April to celebrate the fall of Baghdad. He invited a few colleagues and friends—among them his aide Scooter Libby, Paul Wolfowitz, and Ken Adelman, a former Reagan administration official who had been peppering the op-ed pages with articles supporting the Iraq invasion.

Adelman and his wife, Woodward tells us (as Adelman surely told him), cut short a visit to Paris to attend. "When Adelman walked into the vice president's residence that Sunday night, he was so happy he broke into tears. He hugged Cheney for the first time in the 30 years he had known him." Adelman, in other words, is Woodward's kind of source. When the partygoers threatened to lapse into reverie about the first Gulf war, Adelman interrupted. Woodward quotes his remarks verbatim:

> "Hold it! Hold it!" Adelman interjected. "Let's talk about *this* Gulf war. It's so wonderful to celebrate. . . . It's so easy for me to write an article saying, 'Do this.' It's much tougher for Paul to advocate it. Paul and Scooter, you give advice inside and the president listens. Dick, your advice is the most important, the Cadillac. . . . I have been blown away by how determined [the president] is. So I just want to make a toast, without getting too cheesy. To the president of the United States."

The passage is fugue-like in its complexity, yet it displays, as plainly as possible, how it is that Woodward's books expose the truth about Washington. It lies not in the details but in the way the details are acquired, through the capital's daisy-chain of duplicity, flattery, and guile. Though the quotes that Woodward offers us appear to be direct, they are in fact direct quotes from a source, Adelman, who is quoting himself through a haze of memory and self-congratulation months after the words were uttered, at a party which his host, no doubt, had hoped would remain private. And while it is painful to watch a man parade his own sycophancy, it is dazzling to see it displayed in so many layers: Adelman sucking up to Woodward by describing himself sucking up to Cheney—as a way of impressing his fellow Washingtonians, who may someday, as a consequence, suck up to him.

Imagine the thrill, therefore, that Adelman must have felt that morning last week, when he picked up the paper with trembling hands to see his own little story displayed with such prominence, under so august a byline. Like Stephanopoulos before him, and like numberless others before *him*, he must have heard the words resound like a trumpet blast: "I have arrived!" ♦

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What Is To Be Done in Iraq?

A plan for dealing with every faction

By Reuel Marc Gerecht

So, what *do* we do in Iraq? It is obvious that the Bush administration and its distant and sometimes independent offshoot, the Coalition Provisional Authority in Baghdad, have been knocked off balance by events. It's not the first time, of course. The Baghdad and Najaf bombings of August 2003 unnerved Washington. But the "insurrection" of April 2004 appears to have completely disoriented the administration. Whether it is dealing with the Sunni Arabs, particularly those attacking and resisting U.S. forces in Falluja, or the Shiite militants behind the radical young cleric Moktada al-Sadr, or the anti-radical Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, or the United Nations and the Europeans, the administration certainly doesn't convey the impression that it has any plan left—except to (convincingly) promise perseverance and cross its fingers and hope that the U.N. envoy Lakhdar Brahimi can devise a new political roadmap for the transfer of sovereignty on June 30.

Followers of Sadr, Baghdad

At this point, it is worthwhile to remember that the vast majority of Iraqis are still probably on "our side," that is, they sincerely want a peaceful and workable transition of sovereignty that leads to a functioning, democratic Iraq. Given all the violence, and the enormous political problems that lie ahead, it is easy to forget this datum. Among the Shiites, and the Kurds, and even the Sunnis, it is not hard to see the desire to make things work. Though the June 30 deadline has made both American and Iraqi pulses race, we still probably enjoy more margin of error than we think we do, because relatively few Iraqis—certainly very few senior clerics in Najaf, who are the most consequential political players in the country—want chaos or a return to dictatorship. It's not unlikely the Bush administration will in the end be forgiven its worst mistakes and the problems that would have occurred even if the CPA had played a better hand. The Sunni "insurrection," for example, was in all probability inevitable. Would that we'd rounded up sooner more men from Saddam's elite military units, the intelligence and security services, and the paramilitary storm troopers, but these folks were going to come for us in any case. Ditto the Sunni militants and foreign holy warriors who have no intention to allow a Shiite-led democracy to take shape. And if the CPA had adopted the anti-Shiite mentality present in the voluminous, much-touted, but seldom-read State Department guide to Iraqi reconstruction, things in Iraq could be far worse. Sometimes poor—or no—planning is better than stacks of consistently bad ideas.

But what do we do now? Let's divide Iraq up into its principal sects—Sunnis, Shiites, Kurds, U.N. bureau-

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crats, Europeans, and Americans—and work through them.

The Sunnis. What is the CPA trying to accomplish in the siege of Falluja? It is at this point unclear. If it is trying to send a clear signal of American resolve to the ex-Baathists, Sunni fundamentalists (and Falluja has been a crucible for Wahhabism in Iraq), and foreign holy warriors, it is failing. Just a glance at the Arabic media gives the opposite impression: The brave denizens of the town have successfully defied the American occupiers. Falluja has become a rallying cry. Even Iraqis who hate the insurrectionists may start to flip on us because the Americans appear to be engaging in an endless military action. Iraqi nationalism is a real and fickle thing. Even Shiites who would be thrilled to see the American military maul the ex-Baathists and Sunni fundamentalists fortified in the town (better the Americans deal with them now than we have to later) could start to turn if the United States undertakes a protracted siege. The Shiites may distrust the satellite channels Al Jazeera and Al Arabia for their pro-Saddam bias through the years, but nonstop images and sounds of the Falluja siege with innocent civilians dying day after day will start to tweak Iraqi nationalist nerves. Soon we could be in that very unpleasant situation where even our most steadfast Shiite allies start to say nice things about Iraqis they detest. And we should not forget the effect that this has upon Sunni holy warriors. Bin Ladenism is primarily fed by the appearance of American indecision and weakness. Inside Iraq and out, the "resistance" of Falluja is a godsend for holy warriors like Abu Musab al Zarqawi, an al Qaeda acolyte who has been behind many of the suicide bombings.

The United States simply cannot afford to engage in siege tactics. Negotiations must lead to the immediate surrender of the town and all those within it—the surrender of the insurgents' weaponry is meaningless since weaponry in Iraq can be quickly reacquired. Any agreement where the insurgents abandon their heavy weaponry and withdraw from the town unmolested is even worse. This will only punt down the road a worse confrontation. This is exactly what we did with Moktada al-Sadr. In other words, the only real option is for the Marines to storm the place. We should have taken the town immediately after the four American contract-workers were desecrated; indeed, U.S. armed forces should have cleaned up Falluja months ago. If there is one town in Iraq that has merited classic counterinsurgency tactics, it is Falluja. No doubt, there could be unpleasant repercussions within Iraq and elsewhere from a direct assault—Lakhdar Brahimi has already concluded that "collective punishment is certainly unacceptable and the siege of the city is absolutely unacceptable." But we now have no choice. We cannot retreat and we cannot maintain a siege. Sooner, not later, we need to align the tough rhetoric of the CPA chief L. Paul Bremer with military actions on the ground. It's unlikely we can please Brahimi and successfully fight this war in the Sunni Triangle at the same time.

The Sunnis and politics. It is obvious and understandable that the CPA is desperately trying to engage the Arab Sunnis in a political process that will, in theory, diminish the violence within the Sunni Triangle. It is entirely likely that some military actions were poorly planned and executed, killing and harassing moderate Sunni Arabs who earlier wished us no harm. Clumsy, heavy-handed U.S. actions are perhaps inevitable given the type of combat forces deployed, the American proclivity toward force-protection, and the dubious sources of some American intelligence (think about the known Sunni bad eggs in the hastily rebuilt Iraqi security services and then think about the information given to the U.S. military and the CIA about "hostile" Sunnis—it is quite possible that we have unknowingly on occasion done the bidding of ex-Baathists and Sunni militants). In an effort to make the Sunnis feel more loved, the Bush administration has decided to reverse partially Ambassador Bremer's decision to exclude the former Sunni military elite from a new Iraqi army. Brahimi, a Sunni Algerian Arab who rose to prominence under the rule of Algeria's generals, has already let it be known that he believes the Americans have engaged in too much de-Baathification. This view is also common within the State Department, the uniformed services at the Pentagon, and among Iraq experts in universities and think tanks. The administration ought to realize, however, it is playing with fire.

Does the Shiite community, and especially the Shiite clergy, realize that there are such things as "good Sunni military officers"? Sure. Though not numerous, such men in the past spared Shiite lives and property. The Shiites are well aware of the collective hell that all Iraqis endured under Saddam Hussein. But there is a red line here. And it will be very hard to know when we've crossed it until it is too late. And once we've crossed, we can't step back. And let us repeat what has become obvious since the "insurrection" of Moktada al-Sadr started: We lose the Shiites, we lose Iraq.

Let us be honest about how the Sunni community will view Sunni colonels and generals returning to an Iraqi army. Are they likely to say to themselves, "See, we *will* have a place in a new democratic Iraq," or to think they have a chance to recapture *the* instrument of political power, the ultimate check against a Shiite-led govern-

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ment? The Sunni will to power is the common denominator of modern Iraqi history—Shiites might argue that it is the common denominator of Islamic history. Travel Iraq and it is easy to find Sunnis who sincerely want to see their country democratic. Spend much time among the former military elite and you don't come away with the same sensation. Rather, you get the impression that they are furious at Saddam Hussein for going too far, for cocking up what had been a very good and sustainable situation.

It is possible, of course, that the democratic ethic can grow in such men. Ambassador Bremer has said that only ex-Baathist military officers with good records will be considered for reemployment. But what exactly does that mean? Officers who embraced the party—and your "better" officers over the rank of major probably did enthusiastically—but did not personally shoot women and children or order the destruction of Shiite homes, are these soldiers of good standing? And how many Sunnis will we need to hire into the new army to make the Sunnis feel as if they've received their "fair" share? Do we really think that whatever that share is will turn most of the Sunni rejectionists into democrats? If there is one thing the Provisional Authority may do in Iraq that most resembles Russian roulette, this is it. It would be very wise for the administration, if it insists on going through with this new "Buy Sunni" approach to the Iraqi military, to clear senior Sunni Arab military appointments with a good sampling of Shiites—especially the senior clergy in Najaf.

The essential political step for the Sunnis, as for all Iraqis, is to move to national elections as quickly as possible so we and the Iraqis can see how many Arab Sunnis are willing to vest themselves in a new, Shiite-led democratic order. The Sunnis need to know that the train is leaving the station and that they cannot stop it. Profound cooperation is much more likely if they know as a community that their interests will be permanently shortchanged if the Shiites, Kurds, and Americans must construct a new Iraq without substantial Sunni participation.

For the Shiites, a seven-point plan:

(1) At all times treat Grand Ayatollah Sistani as the leader of the Shiite community. Even if Sistani isn't clearly in control—and Moktada al-Sadr is trying hard to challenge Iraq's preeminent divine—act as if he ought to be. The ayatollah is America's most essential ally in Iraq,

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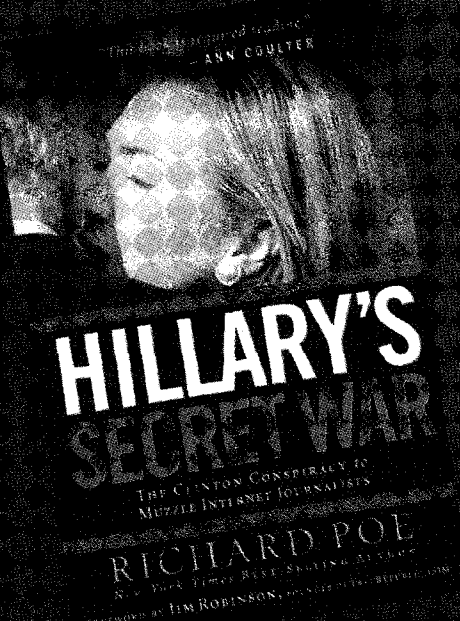

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regardless of whether the Americans and the Iraqis like to publicly admit it.

(2) Realize we have more maneuvering room with the rebellion of Sadr than with the Sunnis in Falluja. This means, first and foremost, don't attack the holy city of Najaf. There are many reasons why the Iraqi Shiites today loathe the Saudis, but up there at the top is the memory of Wahhabi holy warriors besieging and sacking Shiite shrine cities in Iraq repeatedly throughout the 19th century. If we go into Najaf in force, we will lose Grand Ayatollah Sistani, who is the guardian of the holy city. We lose him, we lose the country. There may conceivably be some wiggle room for a lightning-fast strike directly against Sadr, but it's most doubtful that American intelligence could ever supply the information needed to make this tactically possible. It's also most unlikely that the senior clergy of Najaf's clerical establishment, the Hawza, would countenance such a strike, though they detest Sadr. There is nothing wrong, however, with going after Sadr's men elsewhere in the country if they engage in any violent actions against Iraqis, Americans, or our allies. And if they attack, we should respond immediately with lethal force.

Ultimately, however, Sistani and the Hawza must handle Sadr. We cannot do this for them. In the past, Sistani could draw on significant armed forces from the tribes in the Shiite heartland around Najaf. He did so earlier to intimidate the followers of Moktada, the *Sadriyyin*. We must continue to hope that the senior clergy, who loathe the idea of internecine Shiite fighting, especially within Najaf, can find a means to neutralize Sadr as long as he remains in the shrine city. And if Sistani agrees to Sadr's being deported to Iran, then let the young holy warrior go. Even if Sadr has been receiving substantial Iranian encouragement and support—and it's likely that he has—it's unlikely that once in Iran he will be nearly as effective as he is in Iraq.

Though the clerical regime in Tehran unquestionably does not wish America well next door, and will try to sabotage the creation of a democratic order backed by moderate Iraqi clerics, its relationship with Najaf and the Iraqi Shia is complicated. Iranian pilgrims, including clerics, have flooded into Iraq's shrine cities—the *Atabat*, the gateways to Heaven—since the fall of Saddam Hussein. By now, Iran's ruling clerics have no illusions about the Hawza's antagonism to the Iranian model of a theocratic state and the distaste the Iraqi senior clergy has for Iran's "spiritual" guide, Ali Khamenei, whose politically acquired title of "ayatollah" (the sign of God) is not uttered felicitously by Iraq's more accomplished clerics. The regime in Tehran does not like to be seen as openly sponsoring a very young, not particularly well-educated cleric who is challenging the entire religious establishment of Najaf. Khamenei and Iran's number two, Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, are well aware of the clerical dissatisfaction within their own ranks. If they openly or clandestinely go too far in Iraq, Najaf could and probably would push back. This may yet happen. But Sadr in Iran could actually be for Khamenei and Rafsanjani vastly more trouble than he's worth. If they are so foolish as to want him, let them have him.

(3) Have Bremer, or ideally the president, state clearly that America intends to help the United Nations advance the date of national elections as fast as possible. We should state loudly and clearly that we do not want United Nations participation in the political reconstruction of Iraq to delay elections for a constitutional assembly or a national assembly by a single day.

(4) We should state loudly and often that we will oppose any U.N. plan that diminishes the democratic throw-weight of the Shiite majority in Iraq. We believe that all Iraqis ought to have constitutional protections guaranteeing their individual rights, but the United States is not in favor of Lebanonizing Iraq into religious and ethnic cantons. This means that on most matters—except those specifically enumerated in a new constitution—the Shiites, if they vote as a bloc, will legislatively carry the day.

(5) If Brahimi and Sistani disagree on any issue pertaining to the representation of Shiites, Sunnis, and Kurds in a transitional government, side with Sistani. If individuals in the State Department, CPA, or Congress (thinking here of Senators Joseph Biden and Richard Lugar) have a problem with this, then CD-ROMs full of *Sadriyyin* chest-thumping chants should be sent to these protesters. To add extra clarity, labels could be put on the CDs saying, "We lose Sistani, we lose Iraq."

(6) The Transitional Administrative Law is probably as dead as a door-nail. Don't waste time defending it. We should encourage the Shiites and Kurds to sit down and work out a different arrangement to protect Kurdish rights other than through a constitutional veto that effectively checks a Shiite majority on virtually any legislative matter. Encourage the Kurds and Shiites to work out, perhaps through a bicameral legislature, a checks-and-balances arrangement that makes it very difficult for a majority to run roughshod over Kurdish concerns.

(7) Senior U.S. officials and congressmen should repeat to themselves each night before bedtime: "The Islamic Republic of Iran intends to screw us in Iraq." Do not fall victim to the "realist" delusion that some kind of grand bargain is possible with Iran. A clerically supported democracy in Iraq is poisonous for Iran's theocracy. Intra-Shiite squabbles do matter, and this one—the battle

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between a one-man, one-vote democracy and Iran's theocratic "rule of the jurisconsult" (*velayat-e faqih*)—is enormous. Dealing with Iran in Iraq is going to be a very tricky, long-term affair. Most of the heavy lifting will, fortunately, be done by the religious establishment in Najaf. But we shouldn't complicate their lives or ours by seeking, openly or clandestinely, any bilateral U.S.-Iranian discussion on Iraq that allows Iran an official role in Iraq's reconstruction. If Brahimi starts to move in this direction, stop him.

The Kurds. The most overwhelming issue is fairly straightforward: Do the Kurds want to live in a democratic Iraq where they will not be able to veto legislation nearly as often as they might like? We should tell the Kurds that we will not support them against the Shiite objection to their comprehensive constitutional veto power in the Transitional Administrative Law. It's much better for us and all Iraqis if the Kurds and the Shiites have it out now on this issue, not later. Our position in Iraq is only going to get weaker with time—perhaps much weaker very quickly—and the Kurds would be far better off to have this argument with the rest of Iraq while we are in a position to influence events.

The United Nations and the Europeans. It is possible that Lakhdar Brahimi will ride to the rescue of the Bush administration before June 30. His and his office's commentary about excessive American-led de-Baathification and his preference for "technocrats" over would-be politicians in a transitional government probably do not help his case among the Shiites and Kurds, who see such language as pro-Sunni Arab. (Sunni Arabs made up the vast bulk of senior-level technocrats under Saddam Hussein's rule.) Brahimi's own silence as a senior official in the Arab League and as Algeria's foreign minister about Saddam's slaughter of Iraqi Shiites and Kurds after the great rebellion of '91 also probably does not endear him to most Shiites and Kurds. If Brahimi did speak out against this atrocity at the time, it would be most helpful for him to remind others of when and where he remonstrated against Saddam's actions.

Brahimi has, however, two factors working in his favor: the surreal but now unavoidable June 30 deadline and the "uprising" of Moktada al-Sadr, who has spooked the traditional Shiite establishment in Najaf. Both these factors might cause Grand Ayatollah Sistani to be less democratically inclined for the sake of short-term stability. Then again, Sistani might not want to compromise at all on Shiite representation in a transitional government and interim constitution if he feels too threatened by Sadr. The Bush administration and the Coalition Provisional Authority are both concerned about Brahimi's "Sunni" factor. Many within the government certainly know, even if Senator Biden does not, that the Iraqi Shia have viewed the United Nations primarily as a tool to use against the United States to expedite the elections process. If the United Nations ends up offering the Shiites no more, perhaps less, than what Ambassador Bremer was offering, we shouldn't be surprised if the U.N.'s "international legitimacy" and utility in Iraq evaporate overnight. We should obviously support Brahimi's efforts, but we should do so only as long as he does not run afoul of the majority of Shiites. If he does that, we need to be prepared to seize the initiative back, call for national, constituent elections within six months, and directly ask Sistani—privately at first, publicly if necessary—to whom we should transfer sovereignty on June 30. We should not hesitate to pass the responsibility for this to the Grand Ayatollah. (And we will see if he takes it.)

The president should state clearly that America intends to help the U.N. advance the date of national elections as fast as possible.

And concerning the Europeans, don't expect more of them to embrace our democratic cause in Iraq, even with a U.N. resolution. If Iraq were really a serious strategic issue for France and Germany—more serious than internal European Union politics and the humbling of the United States internationally—they would be behind us already. Though the transatlantic foreign-policy establishment in Washington is loath to see or admit the truth, France and Germany have more to gain in Europe—and therefore, in their eyes, in the world—if America is laid low in Iraq. Tactically, philosophically, and spiritually (anti-American *schadenfreude* is a legitimate and serious foreign-policy objective in both these countries), the French and the Germans—the heart of Senator John Kerry's international order—have much more to win by watching the Bush administration electorally defeated in Mesopotamia. Nonetheless, if Colin Powell would finally like to travel throughout Europe making the case for increased European commitment to the Anglo-American effort in Iraq, he should be encouraged to do so.

The Americans. Beyond what has been said above, only two things. Send more troops, and repeat several times each day: "If we lose the Shia, we lose Iraq." ♦

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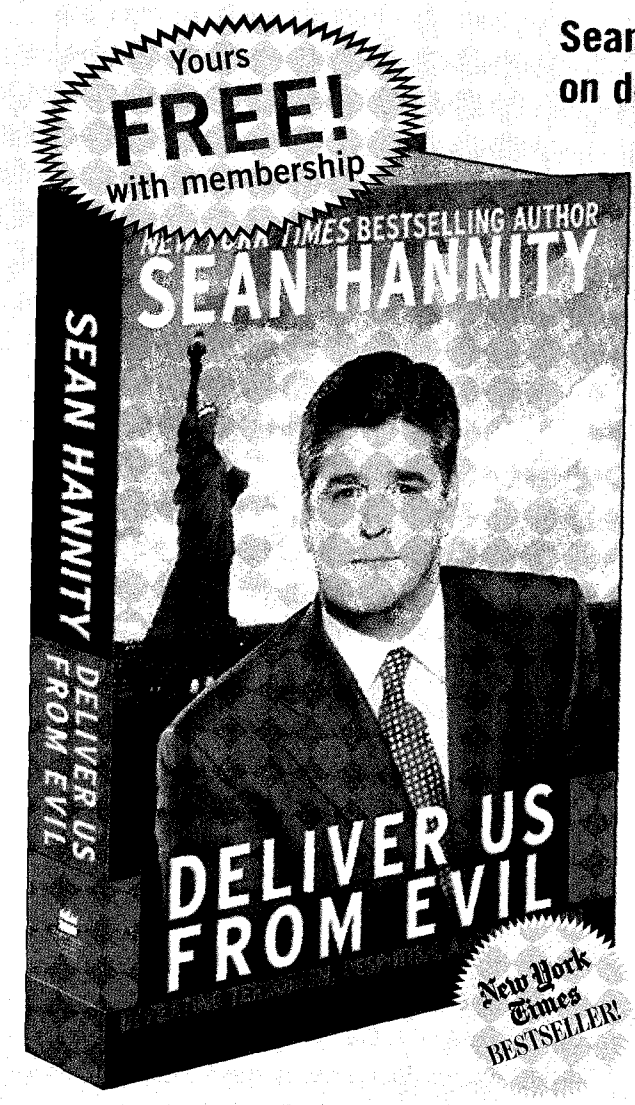

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O, My America

The clash of Huntingtons By James W. Ceaser

Samuel P. Huntington is the author of some of the most important works of political science of this generation, ranging from *Political Order in Changing Societies* (1969) to *The Clash of Civilizations* (1998). His latest book, *Who Are We?*, is without question his most personal. Huntington has written this book not just as a scholar but as a patriot at a time when, according to Huntington, the nation is confronting an "identity crisis." The very unity and cohesiveness of the country are under siege, and the dominant trend—only "temporarily obscured" by Americans' response to the attacks of September 11—is toward national disintegration.

James W. Ceaser is a professor of politics at the University of Virginia.

If creating and preserving a common identity is the most important element in maintaining a nation, then it is correct to focus an historical inquiry on two and only two essential moments: the seventeenth century, when "the core Anglo-Protestant culture" was established with the original settlement of North America, and the late twentieth century, when "the primacy of national identity came under challenge."

Who Are We?
The Challenges to America's National Identity
by Samuel P. Huntington
Simon & Schuster, 448 pp., $27

For the first four centuries, despite massive tides of immigration and enormous demographic shifts, America remained fundamentally the same, as newcomers sought these shores in order to assimilate into this culture. Only in our times has a new ethos emerged in which assimilation is no longer the clear objective. More and more people pass our frontiers with no intention of becoming citizens or embracing the American way of life. In this they are being cheered on by many Americans who disdain their own country.

As dangerous as this situation is, Samuel Huntington is not prepared to claim that America has arrived at a stage of inevitable decline. He is no Oswald Spengler or Paul Kennedy. Things can still be turned around. Nations under some circumstances are "capable of postponing their demise by halting and reversing the processes of decline and renewing their vitality and identity." *Who Are We?* is intended as

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Jennie A. Brownscombe's The First Thanksgiving at Plymouth *(1914).*

Huntington's contribution to saving America.

The most important cause of national disintegration lies in the realm of ideas. Although an intellectual himself and a faculty member at Harvard University, an institution with considerable intellectual pretensions, he has not flinched from launching a frontal assault on the dominant opinion of the intelligentsia. Intellectuals, according to Huntington, have widely abandoned the concept of the nation. Their opposition manifests itself first in the movement that encourages primary identity with subnational entities linked to racial and ethnic groups. Known as multiculturalism, this movement has promoted a sustained campaign in our schools against any form of civic education, having as its objective, in the typical jargon of one of its proponents, the transformation of the schools into "authentic culturally democratic sites" that give emphasis to the cultures of sub-national groups. But encouraging identification with these cultures hardly begins to describe the depth of multiculturalism's opposition to America. Its moving spirit, according to Huntington, is above all an animosity to Western civilization, which is regarded as the engine of oppression of all nonwhite peoples. Multiculturalism, writes Huntington, "is basically an anti-Western ideology."

An even more serious attack against the American nation comes from a group of thinkers whom Huntington labels "transnationals." These are intellectuals "who argue the moral superiority of identifying with humanity at large" and don't place value in the idea of the nation (let alone this nation). As his centerfold Huntington features the ubiquitous Martha Nussbaum, who denounces "patriotic pride" and urges people to give their allegiance to the "worldwide community of human beings." Where Nussbaum treads, others are certain to rush in. And sure enough Huntington spots Richard Sennett trotting along behind, condemning "the evil of a shared national identity," and Amy Gutmann opining that it is "repugnant" for Americans to learn that they are, "above all, citizens of the United States." Huntington might be dismayed, but certainly not surprised, to learn that Gutmann's heartfelt expressions of repugnance have since helped elevate her from a professorship at Princeton to the presidency of the University of Pennsylvania.

Huntington's challenge to the roster of leading intellectual superstars does not stop here. Many who do not share this basic antipathy to the nation nevertheless come under his critical scrutiny because they are too squeamish to take the elementary steps needed to promote the nation; they follow the weak path of willing the ends while denying the means. He cites, for example, Michael Walzer ("A radical program of Americanization would really be un-American") and Dennis Wrong ("Nobody advocates 'Americanizing' new immigrants, as in the bad old ethnocentric past"). This opposition to Americanization, Huntington declares, "is a new phenomenon in American intellectual and political history."

Aiding this intellectual disaffection have been various effects stemming from economic trends of globalization that work to devalue the idea of the nation in general. The modern economy creates a class of transnational elites who identify more with the world than the nation: "The economic globalizers are fixated on the world as an economic unit . . . as the global market replaces the national community, the national citizen gives way to the global consumer." At the head of this new class of transnationals are the "Davos" men and women, whose ranks include not just business executives but global bureaucrats and members of various internationally minded NGOs. These are the people whose hearts thrill at a ruling from The Hague, whose loyalty goes first to the United Nations, and who regard any expression of patriotism as an act equally as atavistic as attending religious services.

Finally, there is a particular development that has taken place over the past few decades that brings home in a concrete way all of these problems. It is "the dominance among immigrants of speakers, largely Mexican, of a single non-English language (a phenomenon without precedent in American history), with the resulting tendencies toward the transformation of America into a bilingual, bicultural society."

Huntington paints a picture of a growing bifurcation in which America is at risk of becoming a permanent two-culture nation like Canada. Worse, America did not inherit this situation, but allowed it to happen. American elites fiddled while the Southwest began to burn. Either elites delighted in the development of a full second culture, or they subordinated long-term political considerations to immediate economic gains—or they buried their heads in the sand and assumed that assimilation must occur automati-

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cally, ignoring the special difficulties posed by the geographic closeness of the Hispanic homeland to American territory and by the sentiments of a people who consider the Southwest to have been stolen from them. For some Hispanic intellectuals, what is occurring is nothing less than the *reconquista* of territories stolen from Mexico in the 1830s and 1840s. There is no interest in Americanization: "Uncle Sam *no es mi tío*." Although many Americans who only a decade ago were blithely urging unlimited immigration and open borders have finally woken up to the difficulties of assimilation, they often continue today to advocate the same policy on the grounds that it is now too late to do anything about it. Thus do they try to excuse their own errors in judgment by citing the magnitude of the problems they have created.

This part of Huntington's book, which appeared as an article in *Foreign Policy*, parallels the argument of Victor Davis Hanson's *Mexifornia*, published last year. Both works have received a great deal of attention, much of it critical, and the authors have been accused of being ungenerous and unsympathetic. Huntington, to be sure, dwells almost exclusively on the downside of Hispanic immigration, while his critics have sought out more hopeful signs, citing contrary evidence of trends of Hispanic assimilation and noting that Hispanics actually seem to place a greater emphasis on the American values of hard work and family than do most other Americans these days.

What's more, almost all developed nations have recently faced intense population pressures from poorer countries—particularly because these developed nations need additional labor. From this perspective, America might feel itself fortunate that whatever assimilation challenges it faces come from Mexico rather than, say, from Algeria. But while it is fashionable and certainly much easier on the part of Huntington's critics to assume things will work out, who can be sure that the prediction of a "bifurcated" culture will prove to be wrong? Huntington, the patriot, has the resolve of Cassandra, sounding an unwelcome warning that few wish to hear. One thing is certain: He is not about to receive La Raza's man of the year award.

These, then, are the immediate threats to American unity. As a practical thinker, Huntington does not much bother with speculative arguments about the value of the nation. He takes its benefits as more or less given and speaks to "the America most Americans love and want." Huntington has not written *Who Are We?* to try to win over the non-patriots, but to help patriots figure out what to do. His approach seeks to identify the components of national identity—so that people can then begin to discern the concrete measures needed to save the country.

Huntington argues that America has two sources of identity. The first he calls "the Creed," by which he means the basic principles of individual rights and government by consent of the governed as these are drawn from universal arguments, such as can be found "most notably in the Declaration of Independence." The Creed claims to make its appeal to rational precept (to "nature"), which is in principle available to all people. (It is curious that Huntington selects the term "creed" to refer to this dimension, as the word evokes powerful connotations of acceptance on the basis of faith.)

The second element of identity is Culture. Culture, as any social scientist knows, is a most useful concept until one is confronted with the task of having to say exactly what it means. Huntington does his best, defining it at one point as "a people's language, religious beliefs, social and political values, assumptions as to what is right and wrong, appropriate and inappropriate, and to the objective institutions and behavioral patterns that reflect these subjective elements"—in brief, nearly everything. But Huntington boils the concept down, as he must, and culture comes to refer to language (English), to

Washington prays at Valley Forge.

religion (sometimes "dissenting Protestantism," sometimes, more broadly, "the Christian religion"), and to a few basic English ideas of liberty. America's culture, in Huntington's shorthand, is "Anglo-Protestantism."

Given the vagueness of the concept of culture, it might be thought best to leave the complex relationship between the creed and the culture in the state of suitably blurred and loose synthesis. But Huntington suggests this is impossible. For whatever reasons, analysts insist on giving clear primacy to one component or the other. The patriotic party splits into partisans of either the Creed or the Culture. Huntington's own position in this dispute emphasizes the cultural core of American identity. America has a Creed, "but its soul is defined by the common history, traditions, culture, heroes and villains, victories and defeats, enshrined in its 'mystic chords of memory.'" *Who Are We?* is a defense of the importance, the legitimacy, and the dignity of Culture.

But Huntington goes much further. While never abandoning the Creed, time and again he warns against an overreliance on it. "A creed alone does not a nation make." The further one proceeds in the book, the clearer it becomes that his warnings shade into serious questions about Creedalism itself.

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Just who are these Creedalists? Among the patriots, it is again the intellectuals who favor Creedalism, as it seems to speak their own language of theory and rational discourse. Huntington provides a partial list of Creedalists, among whom he includes Daniel Bell and Louis Hartz. He then calls attention to one "scholar," unnamed in the text, who has supplied "the most appropriate formulation" of this position, having stated simply that "the political ideas of the American Creed have been the basis of national identity."

That scholar, it turns out, is Samuel Huntington himself, from a well-known book of more than two decades ago, entitled *The Politics of Disharmony*. It is at least an oddity that in a work devoted to the theme of identity the author should ultimately supply testimony, albeit slightly repressed, of a split mind. Yet it appears to be a fact that one and the same person has advanced, each time with considerable skill, an almost opposite argument. In the case of *Huntington* v. *Huntington*, the author of 1981 ("Huntington I") appears about nine parts Creedal and one part Cultural, while the author of today ("Huntington II") is about the reverse.

This change is most readily observable from the historical analysis offered in each book. For Huntington I, the originality of the Creed is stressed, in the sense of its formative role in shaping and defining a direction for American society. As other Creedalists have argued, without recourse to nature America could have developed into any number of forms, as Anglo-Protestant culture was compatible with theocracy (just look at the Puritans).

By contrast, Huntington II shrinks the status of the Creed. It becomes an organic outgrowth of the Culture: "The American Creed is the unique creation of a dissenting Protestant culture. . . . Out of this culture the early settlers formulated the American Creed with its principles of liberty, equality, individualism, human rights, representative government, and private property." In this new way of thinking, which in American historiography was once known as "germ theory," everything was already there, as it were, from the moment of settlement, just waiting to unfold and develop.

The most interesting and troubling aspects of Huntington's current position are revealed by the reasons for his conversion to Culturalism. Huntington contends, first, that the Creed is inadequate to defend the nation. Proponents of the Creed, while patriotic in their intentions, are almost as responsible for national disintegration as the multiculturalists: "America with only the Creed as a basis for unity would soon evolve into a loose confederation of ethnic, racial, cultural, and political groups." There is simply not enough "glue" in the Creed, Huntington insists, to keep a nation together: The only true supporters of the nation are those who make Culture the core.

Huntington's attack on his old faith in Creedalism undoubtedly has a point if it refers to the most zealous form of Creedalism, which clearly exists, that makes no practical concession to Culture. But one can imagine the earlier Huntington demanding the same treatment for Culturalism—as it, too, in its most zealous manifestations promotes fanaticism and sows its own seeds of disunion.

A second reason for Huntington's conversion is related to his current views of America's position in the world. While the focus of *Who Are We?* is mostly on the domestic side, the theme of America in the world seems never to be very far from Huntington's concerns. The problem with Creedalism in this arena is its clear "imperial" implication. Huntington is a nationalist, but a moderate one who has little use for contemporary international Creedalists who believe that "people of other societies have basically the same values as Americans, or if they do not have them, they want to have them, or if they do not want to have them, they misjudge what is good for their society, and Americans have the responsibility to persuade them or to induce them to embrace the universal values that America espouses."

For Huntington the emphasis on Culture and the tethering of the Creed to the Culture would perform the salutary role of cooling such universalistic pretensions. It would go too far to read *Who Are We?* as a complete renunciation of any kind of universal possibilities. Huntington ties the origin of the Creed to Anglo-Protestant culture, but he does not—or does not quite—equate origin with essence. He grants that the Creed can—indeed has—spread, albeit in an attenuated form, to nations that are not Anglo-Protestant. But there is no question that his argument moves in the direction of saying that spreading the Creed very far afield, given its chiefly cultural origins, is a delusion.

It is likewise the case that for Huntington the character of the international situation today, with the rise of militant Islam, fits with a growing emphasis on Culturalism. "Muslim hostility," he writes, "encourages Americans to define their identity in

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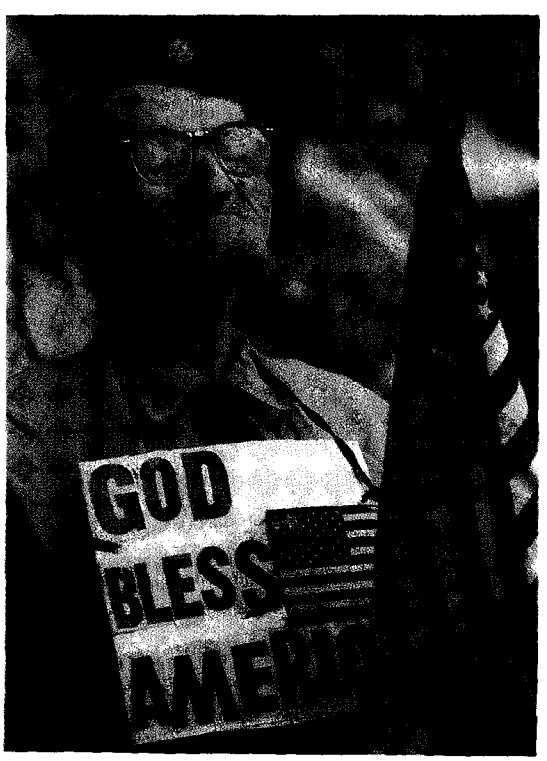
religious and cultural terms, just as the Cold War promoted political and creedal definitions of that identity." His analysis goes on to emphasize the religious dimension of the conflict, citing statements of Islamic militants attacking America "because it is Christian" and calling for a "jihad against the Jews and the Crusaders."

Here, however, Huntington's desire to bolster Culturalism at home may have led him astray. It is not at all clear that the primacy of the cultural assumption in the present conflict is true—Islamic fundamentalism is arguably even more opposed to the Creed than it is to Christianity. And even if it were true, it is not evident on strategic grounds why it would be wiser to allow the enemy to define us on his terms than for us to define him on ours.

Huntington's third reason for converting to Culturalism goes beyond the language of pure "system maintenance" and raises perhaps the most interesting theoretical issue of the book. Huntington argues that Creedalism does not sustain the nation in the form that we want it to have. A great deal of what is most lovable about America, and perhaps also higher and more valuable, is contained in the Culture, not in the Creed. For Huntington, it is clearly not just a matter of convenience that Americans have one language, which happens to be English; rather, it is important that we speak English and find our roots in Shakespeare, not Cervantes. By the same token, it is not just a matter of convenience for Huntington that America is chiefly Christian, rather than Buddhist or Islamic. He wants it to be that way. More broadly, he argues that such preferences are justified, and they should be openly defended and preferred—not be made objects of shame, hidden from view. But Creedalism (at any rate, the zealous Creedalism that Huntington attacks) is not only indifferent to these cultural preferences, but it is almost antagonistic to them.

Samuel Huntington—and this goes for Huntington I no less than Huntington II—has tended to view Creed and Culture as different things, both necessary, but finally at war with each other. It seems to be the old war between rationalism on the one side and religion and tradition on the other. Our choice, for Huntington, seems to be either to subordinate the Culture to the Creed and eventually die, or to subordinate the Creed to the Culture and survive. Huntington has never looked for a higher regulative principle that might somehow subsume these two in a more rational account.



It would certainly be a nice theoretical project to consider how these two could be put together in a way that would make sense of each and give each its due. Such a project would have to begin by reflecting on the inevitable fact that universal principles must always be found and expressed within particular contexts. A Catholic or Buddhist or perhaps one day an Islamic nation that embraces the Creed will inevitably look different from America.

Further, the Creed would have to be understood—as it perhaps should properly be understood—not in the outsized way in which, unfortunately, it often appears, but in a way that does not deny the manifestations of Culture. The Creed checks the Culture only at the point at which it conflicts with the Creed—no further. A nation living under the Creed is under no obligation to be neutral. It is entitled, so far as it wishes, though hopefully in accord with its good judgment, to embrace all preferences or prejudices that do not deny essential rights. Finally, the Creed might claim to be the political standard that expresses a principle of justice for living together, not an account of the highest ends of life. Under such principles, and with necessary forbearance on both sides, Culture and Creed might learn to live together.

Samuel Huntington is a fine asset to the nation he loves. We should be pleased that over the past half century we have had the benefit of having had more than one of him. If the first Huntington was too Creedal, and the Second too Cultural, perhaps, if we are fortunate enough, we will yet see a third who gets it right. ♦

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For the Birds

New adventures in literary birding.

BY ROBERT FINCH

As an American pastime, birding is hardly new. It goes back at least to the father of American bird writing and painting, a French immigrant named John James Audubon. With his 1827 *Birds of America*, Audubon initiated the American obsession with bird-watching (which, in pre-binocular days, was usually synonymous with bird-shooting). But birding remained a rather limited and privileged enthusiasm, and its literature consisted mostly of sentimental Victorian effusions and ponderous, heavily detailed identification manuals.

The Verb 'To Bird'
Sightings of an Avid Birder
by Peter Cashwell
Paul Dry, 273 pp., $14.95

The Big Year
A Tale of Man, Nature, and Foul Obsession
by Mark Obmascik
Free Press, 268 pp., $25

Going Wild
Adventures with Birds in the Suburban Wilderness
by Robert Winkler
National Geographic, 208 pp., $16

Then in 1934, a twenty-five-year-old ornithologist from Jamestown, New York, published the first in a series of illustrated guidebooks that would revolutionize recreational bird-watching. Roger Tory Peterson's *A Field Guide to the Birds* introduced the brilliantly simple principle of illustrating each species with distinguishing "field marks," indicated by arrows and accompanied by simple descriptions. His guide made bird-watching accessible to the masses—and the masses came. According to a recent study, one out of seven Americans now at least tries to identify birds, if only at backyard bird feeders. Some three million consider themselves active bird-watchers, and over two million keep "life lists," a practice that is generally recognized as the mark of a serious birder. In this country birders support a multimillion-dollar industry that supplies everything from birdseed and squirrel-proof feeders to high-tech spotting scopes and bird guides—not to mention bird-embossed stationery and T-shirts.

Apart from a few enduring classics—such as J.A. Baker's *The Peregrine* (1967), Peter Matthiessen's *The Wind Birds* (1967), and John Hay's *The Bird of Light* (1991)—"birding" (the active pursuit of birds, as opposed to the passive appreciation of "bird-watching") has received limited literary recognition over the years. "Birding," as a noun, is still not found in many dictionaries, nor is it recognized by my word processor's spell-checker.

In recent months, however, a flock of books about birding has appeared, each approaching the subject in deliberately literary ways. Peter Cashwell's *The Verb 'To Bird': Sightings of an Avid Birder*, for instance, is liberally sprinkled with literary references, and the author gives an overview of birds in myth and literature (including such howlers of bird-writing as *Fear not, grand eagle, / The bay of the beagle!*) before proceeding to his own adventures in birding. An English teacher living in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, Cashwell gives his book a faux-grammatical structure, dividing it into three sections: "Birding," "Birds," and "Birded." Chapter titles are often literary puns ("Great Unexpectations"), and their contents are summarized by a list of wry subheadings in the manner of eighteenth-century novels.

Although it contains a fair amount of detailed and often vivid description of the birds themselves, *The Verb 'To Bird'* is more about birding than birds, more about the behavior and psychology of birders (primarily the author) than about avian migration or mating rituals. In some chapters the birds are merely hooks for narrating a domestic drama, as in "An Owl for the Moping," in which a stressful family holiday is redeemed by the sighting of a great horned owl. Occasional trips to such places as Long Island and Iowa provide fodder for observations on regional cultural differences as much as opportunities to see new species.

All of which is to say that Cashwell has the true essayist's instinct for digression and for filtering everything through his own sensibility. His style is breezy, satiric, and self-mocking—as well as full of word play, pop-culture references, and hyperbole: a yellow-shafted flicker perching in a tree is described as "the ornithological equivalent of Pat Boone performing heavy metal songs in leather, studs, and tattoos." It's a style that seems modeled on that of humorist Dave Barry, down to the use of CAPITAL LETTERS for emphasis. The result is amusing and witty, but, like Barry's, it works best in short doses. Cashwell is a little too in love with the archness of his own voice; after a while the constant punning begins to wear thin, and the references to such pop phenomena as Scooby-Doo and Faith No More sound mannered and dated.

More troubling, the author's determination to write in a high-octane style often leads him to strain after effect. In "The Cardinal Sin," for example, he constructs an entire chapter around a protracted search to find out "Why *is* the cardinal called the cardinal?" When he finally stumbles serendipitously on the answer (the cardinal was first given that name by the early French Catholic explorer LaSalle), he claims a life lesson drawn from birding skills: "I had learned

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much more than the origin of a single name. I had learned that the nature of birding is far more universal, far closer to the path of wisdom, than I had ever dreamed." The lesson seems more a literary effect than a genuine revelation.

It's too bad that *The Verb 'To Bird'* is so frequently overwritten, for the style tends to overwhelm the book's virtues. Cashwell's descriptions are most effective when most concise. Regarding the brilliant coloration of the painted bunting, he comments, "When you blink, it leaves an afterimage." When his comparisons are based in felt experience rather than verbal cleverness, they are often quite evocative. "If pelicans were drivers, they'd own huge, rectangular American luxury cars with plush interiors," he writes, and the passage goes on to convey wonderfully the appearance of untroubled serenity these magnificent birds have in flight.

Some of his chapters are genuinely moving, such as "Laughing at Broken Hammers," a meditation on the enduring legend of the ivory-billed woodpecker. The ivorybill, a denizen of old-growth Southern swamp-forests, has not been reliably sighted for several decades and is presumed extinct. Despite intense and fruitless searches for the bird, birders continue to hope the species survives somewhere, if only because its nonexistence cannot be conclusively proven.

Even the author is subject to such phantasms of desire as he recounts an ambiguous sighting of a large woodpecker in a South Carolina swamp that may, just may, have been an ivorybill. For once, his pathos and comparisons seem richly earned, and he expresses a universal lesson about human longing in the shape of a bird.

A diametrically opposite approach to birding is dramatized in Mark Obmascik's *The Big Year: A Tale of Man, Nature, and Fowl Obsession*. If for Cashwell birding is about surprise, uncertainty, and "yielding to the unexpected," for Obmascik it is rooted in the hunting instinct: going after a specific prey and bagging it. He even suggests there is a gene for birding, and that it is, at bottom, an obsession.

All paintings from John James Audubon's *The Birds of America* (1827-1838).

Blue Jay
Cyanocitta cristata

The Big Year chronicles what may be the least-known national competition in the United States: an annual quest among birders to see who can accumulate the highest total of species sighted on the North American continent in twelve months. Specifically, the book describes the *annus mirabilis* of 1998, when an amazing total of 745 species was reached by one of the participants. The record, which will likely never be broken, was due to a number of unusual circumstances: a powerful El Niño that brought Pacific pelagics to the West Coast, a series of Asian storms that blew dozens of almost-never-seen birds onto the Aleutian archipelago, and a freedom and flexibility in air travel unlikely to return after the attacks of September 11, 2001.

Certainty, not surprise, is the objective of Obmascik's three main characters, who seem chosen to represent an extreme range of personality, motivation, and resources. Sandy Komito is a roofing contractor from New Jersey, a self-made millionaire who already holds the highest score for a year and is determined to spare no expense, nor any other birder, to shatter his own record. Ed Levantin is a comparatively mild-mannered corporate executive from Aspen, Colorado, who, after several unsuccessful attempts to retire, feels he can finally indulge his lifelong passion for birds in this ultimate competition. And finally there is Greg Miller, a young, overweight, underfunded, self-styled "loser," reeling after a painful divorce and subject to depression, who embarks on his Big Year as a way of regaining self-esteem and purpose in his life.

While Cashwell flaunts his personality in *The Verb 'To Bird'*, Obmascik assumes in *The Big Year* the role of the invisible, omniscient narrator, relating his birding troika's year-long adventures. Though he conducted

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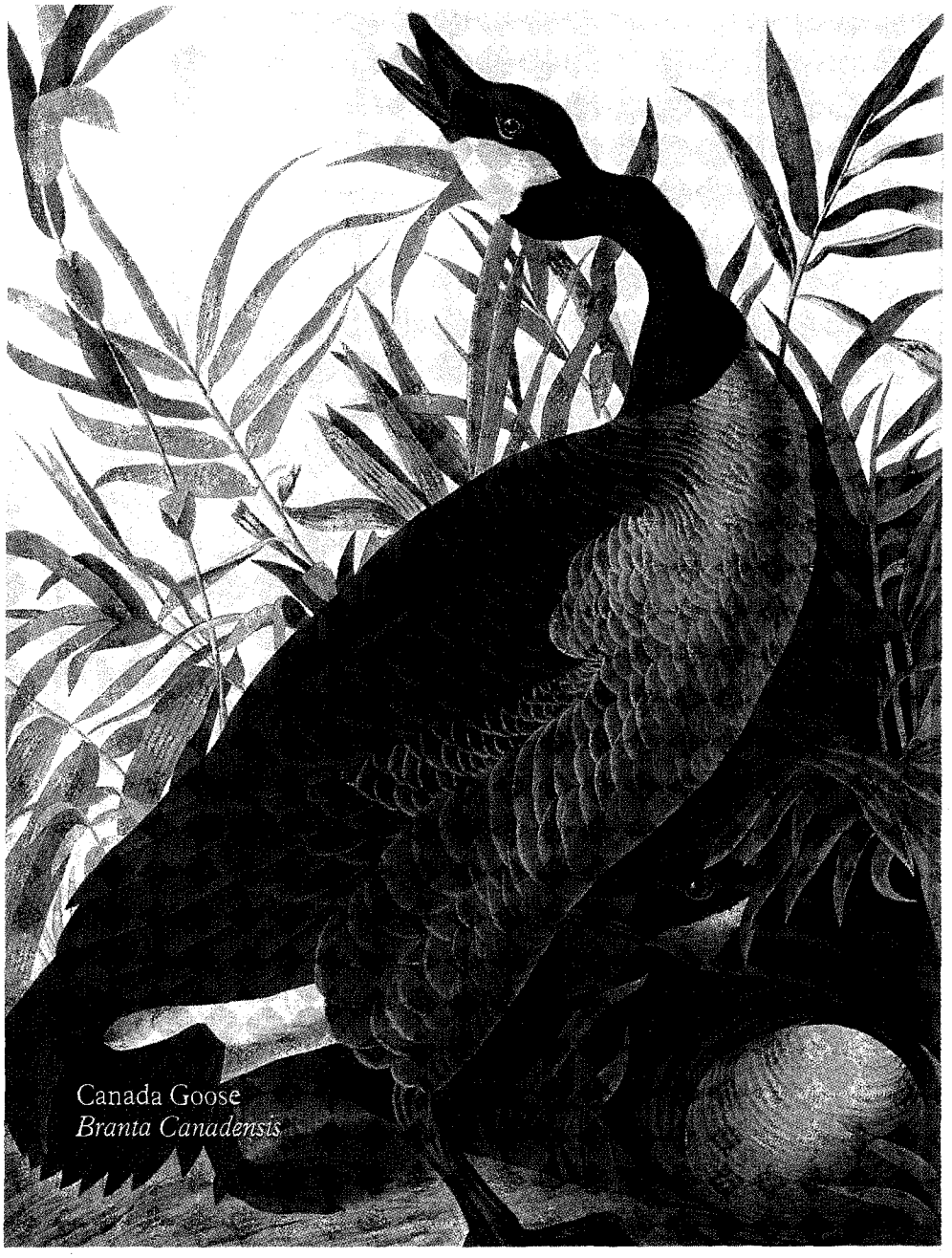

hundreds of hours of interviews and did extensive field research, Obmascik "did not personally witness a single day" of the competition. But his three protagonists appear to have been more than willing interviewees, revealing personal, candid, and often embarrassing information about themselves, thus allowing much of the narrative to be effectively told from inside their heads.

Obmascik deftly weaves the three characters' stories so that the narrative has the feel of a horserace, with the accumulating count for each competitor appearing intermittently as mile markers. His style is restrained but lively, and when he does offer an occasional extravagant simile (the Mexican chachalacas "sounded as if Ethel Merman had swallowed a rusty trombone"), it spices up the narrative without overwhelming it.

Actual birds in *The Big Year* seem almost incidental: arbitrary targets, like ducks in a shooting gallery, or markers in a testosterone triathlon by land, sea, and air. As Al Levantin observes, "Big Year birding wasn't even birding; it was traveling to birding." After an expensive, tiring trip by Sandy Komito to see a Xantu's hummingbird in a backyard in Vancouver, the actual sighting occupies one sentence. "The Xantu's hummingbird stayed long enough for Komito to snap a few pictures." This exquisite tropical bird's accidental visit to North America is not given even a cursory description. As Obmascik puts it, "It was the chase, not the bird, that made [Komito's] chest throb."

Despite the book's intriguing characters, narrative drive, and journalistic skill, one comes to feel there is something distasteful and petty, even reprehensible, in the obsessions of these men. The whole point of the Big Year seems to be out-competing, out-enduring, out-foxing, out-exploiting, and, above all, out-spending the other birders. Moreover, the explosion of information technology seems to have rendered individual skill and knowledge, or even social skills, irrelevant. The North American Rare Bird Alert, for instance, allows instant online notification of a sighting anywhere on the continent, or "one-stop shopping for the seldom-seen."

There is an unnatural quality to the whole enterprise. Many of the sightings occur in such non-wild settings as trailer parks and Wal-Mart parking lots, and the birders seem to spend more time on planes or listening to radio reports than they do in the field. The most bizarre example of the unnatural nature of the Big Year is the Himalayan snowcock, a grouse-like bird that Levantin and Miller pursue in a hair-raising and stomach-churning helicopter flight through the cloud-covered ridges of the Rockies.

As its name suggests, the Himalayan snowcock is actually a native of Kashmir and Pakistan, but during the 1960s and 1970s a rich American hunter imported and released 1,569 of the birds into southeastern Nevada to provide a large tasty game bird for hunters. The snowcocks proved so elusive they flopped with hunters, but the Ruby Mountains have become a mecca for birders with a passion to see an artificial bird in a wild setting. One can envision a time not far off when other exotics—penguins, perhaps—will be introduced into the wild specifically to feed the insatiable appetite of Big Year birders.

The most troubling aspect of the book, though, is its unquestioning presentation of birding, especially Big Year birding, as essentially a competi-

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tive sport in which the natural world is little more than an outdoor gymnasium whose health and protection is not the concern of the participants or the writer.

The most startling revelation in the book is left frustratingly unexplained. In a chapter set on the remote Alaskan island of Attu, Obmascik writes, "Every year for the past decade or so, museum and federal agencies had quietly sent gunmen to Attu to shoot rare birds for their collections." The targets of this license-to-kill included a great spotted woodpecker, which, Obmascik tells us, was "one of the first" ever recorded in North America before Avian Agent 007 "summarily blasted it with his shotgun." Come again? Are the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty and the Endangered Species Act suspended on Attu? Obmascik never explains, and the only outrage expressed is by the tour leader, who moans that a "great spotted woodpecker would have been the bird of the decade for dozens of his paying guests."

Oddly, though, Obmascik's birders are somewhat redeemed by the very absurdity of their quest. There are, as he points out, no material rewards, no celebrity, no offers of endorsement connected with the Big Year. The only rewards are being the best and breaking a record. The prestige, such as it is, is among a rather limited number of other birders. In this sense the Big Year is a "pure" amateur sporting event, in the way the Boston Marathon used to be, and as few remain.

The day may come when Big Year competitors will be paid to wear Zeiss T-shirts and David Sibley Feed caps, when the likes of Komito, Levantin, and Miller will be tracked by ESPN video cams or featured in the latest reality-television show ("Survivor: Cape May, New Jersey"), but for now they pursue their goal and endure its hardships for the thrill of victory alone.

In the end, despite my reservations about their motivations and methods, I could not help but feel a certain admiration for these men. Like anyone who lives for impractical passions—whether it be stalking feathered rarities, playing jazz in small nightclubs, or, for that matter, writing books—they are willing to sacrifice money, pride, health, security, the comfort of home, and the companionship of family and friends to pursue the elusive bird of desire.

Bachman's Warbler
Sylvia bachmanii

On the surface, Robert Winkler's *Going Wild: Adventures with Birds in the Suburban Wilderness* is the least impressive of the recent books. Despite the title, the adventures it describes are anything but wild. Winkler writes in a relatively plain style, largely devoid of the word play, humor, and cultural references of Cashwell, or the vivid characterization, psychological insights, and narrative momentum of Obmascik.

In range and subject matter, too, *Going Wild* is the most circumscribed. Winkler limits himself to the "suburban wilderness" of Connecticut's Fairfield County, a stone's throw from Manhattan and certainly one of the most tamed and thoroughly explored areas of the country. He does so in part because of his stated mission to demonstrate that even in such densely settled areas the possibilities for encounters with wild birds are numerous and rich. But he also does it out of practical necessity. Though he lives in one of the wealthiest counties in the nation, he himself has led the peripatetic and modest life of a freelance writer, moving every few years from one rental to another, currently residing in a basement apartment in Newtown.

Going Wild is also probably the least likely to attract readers who are not already interested in birds or birding. Winkler focuses nearly exclusively on the birds themselves, and, with few exceptions, they are common and familiar species. He deliberately eschews the competitive spirit of the Big Year, or even of Connecticut's much-reduced version, the Big Day, which he says involves "a level of intensity that may not be altogether healthy." He has even stopped participating in the venerable Christmas Bird Count because he eventually found organized counts "too routine and mathematical," and "wanted to go deeper."

But for all its lack of literary ambition, charged personality, and dramatic narrative, this book gradually won me over. Winkler's self-circumscribed excursions and restrained narrative presence were a refreshing contrast to the frenetic continent-hopping and self-absorption of the Big Year

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American Flamingo
Phoenicopterus ruber

birders, his unadorned style a welcome corrective to the self-conscious literary flourishes of *The Verb 'To Bird.'* Because Winkler's is a restrained sensibility, one savors those unexpected moments of whimsy that occasionally pop up. One bitter winter morning he plucks the ice coating that had formed on the dead leaves of a mountain laurel, "a transparent replica of the leaf it had covered, complete with venation. What could I do with such delicate, ephemeral things? I swallowed several."

If for nothing else, I'm grateful to *Going Wild* for expressing my longstanding gripe with American filmmakers. In the chapter "Bird Songs of Hollywood: An Unnatural History," Winkler indicts Tinseltown, with uncharacteristic sarcasm, for being "tone deaf to the songs of birds." Whether it is placing red-tailed hawks on deserted Pacific islands, loons in suburban backyards, or South American toucans in boreal forests, the cavalier ignorance of even the most basic ornithology in creating soundtracks has spoiled films for me for decades, and I was delighted to see someone finally taking Hollywood to task.

In stark contrast to the Big Year Birders with their oblivious charges into nature, Winkler exhibits an understated but strong environmental ethic. When he unexpectedly comes upon the ground nest of a worm-eating warbler, the first he has ever seen, he not only does not touch the eggs or the nest, but moves quickly on, knowing that "it would have been a death sentence for the eggs, because the scent of a human, often leading to food, attracts predators."

What gives *Going Wild* its unexpected power is Winkler's accumulating observations and genuine devotion to his local haunts. He *invests* himself in his birds through careful attention and long familiarity. His analysis of the various calls of the barred owl, for instance, is illuminating and lyrical: "Forget what you might have heard about owls as portenders of doom. Owls are optimists. Properly interpreted, their language has the power to light dark nights and dark souls." In describing the kill of a cardinal by a sharp-shinned hawk, Winkler reacts viscerally to a hawk's plucking at a still-living cardinal's breast, calling it "fiendish"—but he concludes that "the Sharp-shinned Hawk hunts in gathering dusk and respects neither the cardinal's beauty nor the nature writer's sensibility."

Above all, *Going Wild* convincingly demonstrates the value and power of attachment and locality. Winkler sees deeply into Fairfield County. He restricts his travels and observations to his immediate area, not in the spirit of artificially limited bird-counting exercises, but because in so doing he comes to know his home ground with deep familiarity, intimacy, and affection.

When a potentially destructive project is proposed in his beloved Sherwood Island State Park, his years of carefully noted bird sightings and nesting records help him mount a successful campaign against it. And when his opponents accuse him of gross exaggeration in comparing Sherwood Island State Park to the Grand Canyon, Winkler replies, "Well, it's the Grand Canyon to me"—a ringing rejoinder that must resonate with anyone who has ever cherished local places, and the birds that inhabit them. ♦

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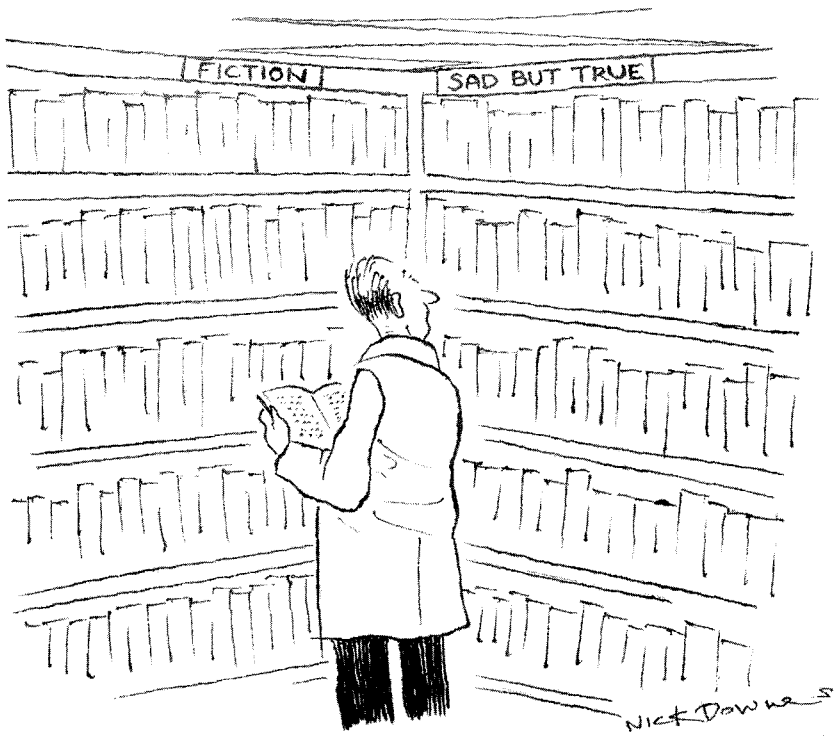

Books in Brief

***The Fall of the Berlin Wall* by William F. Buckley Jr. (Wiley, 212 pp., $19.95).** This year marks the fifteenth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. And not to be missed amid the commemorations and celebrations is the new book in which William F. Buckley admits that though he had written occasionally about the divided city, "What I never did was reason fruitfully to what exactly would be required to bring the wall down. I am glad I did not attempt this, because I would not have been able to write with anything like the authority now made possible, thanks to the work of so many historians and journalists and diplomats who have told their stories."

The Fall of the Berlin Wall is a comprehensive read, compellingly written. And it contains some details that have until now been forgotten. Everyone remembers John F. Kennedy's speech at Rudolf Wilde Platz in 1963: "Freedom has many difficulties, and democracy is not perfect. But we have never had to put a wall up to keep our people in, to prevent them from leaving us. All free men, wherever they may live, are citizens of Berlin. And therefore, as a free man, I take pride in the words '*Ich bin ein Berliner*.'" Yet few recall the stirring words of Nikita Khrushchev, who met with East German factory workers two days later: "But me, I like [the Berlin Wall]. It pleases me tremendously. The working class of Germany has erected a wall so that no wolf can break into the German Democratic Republic again. Is that bad?"

It wasn't good, considering people were not trying to break in, but rather, break out. And risking their lives in the process—by digging tunnels or hiding in secret compartments in cars and trucks. One family went by hot-air balloon. Many others made a mad dash across a no-man's-land that became more perilous each day. Some were fortunate. Others, like Peter Fechter, were not. The eighteen-year-old construction worker was shot while climbing the wall in 1962. He fell back in pain, crying for help. But the East German police just left him there, not firing a second shot or sending him medical assistance. They let him die a slow and painful death, later dragging his body away as West Berliners watched helplessly and in horror. This willingness to pay the ultimate price for freedom is something none of us should forget.

—*Victorino Matus*

***Booknotes on American Character: People, Politics, and Conflict in American History*, edited by Brian Lamb (PublicAffairs, 591 pp., $29.95).** To illuminate the American disposition, Brian Lamb collects interviews with seventy-five writers who have appeared on C-SPAN's *Booknotes*, the popular television show he hosts. *Booknotes on American Character* presents a mosaic of the national enterprise, in talks with authors who have written on American characters—from the prohibitionist Carry Nation to William Minor, the murderous and brilliant American contributor to the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

Not every selection works. Michael Dyson's disquisition on the political insights of rapper Tupac Shakur falls flat. Warren Zimmerman knows little about Francis Parkman, ascribing to the great historian the view that the British beat the French in North America due to "racial superiority." Michael Moore supplies an introduction that's sour and conspiratorial.

But along the way, several forgotten figures—Representative Walter Judd, inventor Philo Farnsworth, and pilot John Boyd—get their due. The "American Character" is, as Teddy Roosevelt once said, a combination of practicality, positivism, and idealism. Brian Lamb and his contributors provide a real service in putting so many fine American characters on display.

—*Dan Dickinson*

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From *Caesar in Roma (Caesar in Rome)*, by Bobbus Woodwardus, 47 B.C.E.; translated by H.E. Holmes IV (Tempus Press, 1988)

CAESAR IN ROME

night, taking a break from worries about Pompey's armies, Julius Caesar threw a party at the regia on the Forum Romanum. He told friends he was determined to have a good time, no matter what the senators thought. "Bring me grapes," he told a slave, playfully pulling her ear. "I'd love some really tasty grapes."

The slave scurried off, as Caesar found himself a goblet.

My nose itches, thought Marcus Junius Brutus as he entered the party, but it was impossible to worry about that because his thoughts were always about how to defend Rome, and never about his own interests. There was Caesar across the room enjoying some grapes. It would be a good time to try and chat, even if conversations were getting awkward with Caesar after his return from Ilerda. It was the dictatorship thing, especially the face-on-coins and the purple robes, that was getting in the way. "Hi, Pontifex Maximus," said Brutus, catching Caesar's eye and throwing an arm over his goblet, swirling the wine with his elbow.

"Hi Bru-Bru," Caesar said, looking him in the eye keenly, then severely, while grabbing his neck. Caesar was fond of nicknames. "It's good to see you."

Was is it really good, though? Brutus didn't know, but said, "Good to see you, too." Brutus wondered if Caesar shared his passion for the welfare of children, small animals, justice, and everlasting peace. It was hard to tell. Perhaps some repeated light stabbing—nothing fatal—would serve as a warning. It might help Caesar wake up and smell the nectar. He would talk to Caius Cassius and Decimus about it.

"So," Brutus began, trying to puncture the silence, "how's Legion XXXVII doing on avenging the death of Crassus?"

Caesar merely grunted, spitting out grapeseeds. Brutus was relieved when Calpurnia, Caesar's wife, joined the two men. There was only one way to describe that woman: above suspicion. "Hi fellows," Calpurnia said, locking eyes with Brutus. Was that fragrance Giorgius Armanius?

Brutus looked good, quite good, but Calpurnia's loyalty was always to Caesar and to Rome. She worried about Julius when he was campaigning among the Gauls, but she knew he was a skilled fighter. Anyway, why worry about herself—she always put others first, whether it was children or small animals. Watching Brutus and Julius talk, she knew that if she said exactly the right thing, which she usually did, she could save civilization as we know it.

"Grapes are so yummy," she said, happy to have accomplished her mission.

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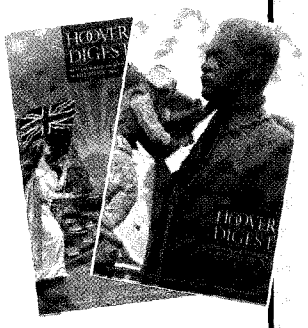
The Case for Operation Iraqi Freedom

HOOVER DIGEST
RESEARCH AND OPINION ON PUBLIC POLICY



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A year to the elimination of Saddam Hussein's murderous dictatorship, shortly before the Coalition Provisional Authority hands over power to the Iraqi people, and with violence in Iraq on the upswing, **how do the Bush administration's arguments in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom hold up?**

Critics assert that those arguments amount to two lies—Saddam's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) posed an imminent threat, and Iraq cooperated with Al Qaeda in executing the 9/11 attacks. In fact, the administration put forth five main arguments in favor of military action. Those arguments were advanced by the administration with varying intensity and frequency—and they hold up, separately and together, reasonably well.

First, in the run-up to war, the Bush administration highlighted the intolerable danger Saddam's WMD posed. Its claims were consistent with Clinton administration claims dating back to 1998, and both were rooted in the best available intelligence. Although we now know that the intelligence was flawed, the Kay report confirmed dozens of Iraqi weapons programs and documented Saddam's intention to restart programs when possible. Dick Cheney's assertion in the summer of 2002 that the risk of inaction in Iraq was greater than the risk of action was debatable. But based on the evidence at hand, and the terrifying new realities September 11, 2001, made manifest, it was a reasonable judgment.

Second, on September 21, 2001, in a nationally televised speech to a joint session of Congress, President Bush declared that the war on terror extended to terrorist networks around the world and to "any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism." Although a link to 9/11 has not been established, Saddam's trafficking in terror is notorious—among other bloody ventures Iraq had been, until the fall of Baghdad, Hamas's biggest financial backer.

Third, the United States invoked international law. In November 2002, the administration persuaded the U.N. Security Council to unanimously pass resolution 1441, which warned of "serious consequences" if Iraq failed to provide a thorough accounting of its weapons and weapons programs and to completely disarm. In December, U.N. weapons inspector Hans Blix reported that Iraq had failed to provide the required account. In March 2003, the United States upheld the Security Council's integrity by implementing 1441 and sixteen previous resolutions flouted by Iraq.

Fourth, humanitarian considerations counseled action. In addition to the hundreds of thousands he consigned to mass graves, and the dissenters his henchmen fed alive into meat grinders, Saddam exploited our containment regime to divert oil-for-food money to his palaces and weapons programs, leading to the deaths, according to the United Nations Children's Fund estimates, of 60,000 Iraqi children a year.

Fifth, **removing Saddam promotes democracy in the Middle East, an appealing prospect save perhaps for those in the region who rule by fear** and for those around the world who profit from doing business with tyrants.

Reasonable people can differ. Arguably, containment better served U.S. national security interests, in part because the establishment of democracy in Iraq may yet prove beyond our competence. The Bush administration has fallen short in educating public opinion—both domestically and internationally regarding Operation Iraqi Freedom. But what cannot be denied, all things considered, is the reasonableness of the case to be made.

—Peter Berkowitz

Peter Berkowitz is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution and an associate professor of law at the George Mason University School of Law.

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